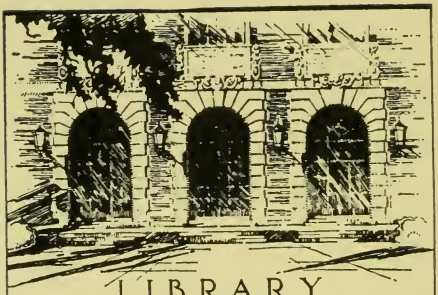

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When I awoke it was evident, by the slanting sunbeams, which spangled in dusty rays through the loop-holes of the barn, that the day was

far advanced. Fearing that I should be discovered if I sallied forth during the light, I resolved to wait until dark, and, although my lips were parched, I dared not move to slake my burning thirst at the streamlet, whose tantalising ripple gurgled at a short distance. Thinking it prudent, however, to examine the country before night, I crawled to one of the apertures, when I heard voices, and saw the farmer, with two men and a couple of wagons, approaching my place of concealment. I therefore instantly sprang back, and running to the furthest corner, burrowed down as low as possible among the sheaves. The barn doors were soon opened, and the following colloquy took place.

"Well, as I was a telling you," said the farmer, "the sooner we gets it all carried up to the machine and thrashed, the better. Prices be looking up at Salisbury, and I must make hay whilst the sun shines. These be cruel times for farmers; high rents and low prices. The corn crops looks too well by half for the old stock, and dang it, there's such a lot a good new hay this year that prices is down, and one

arn't got nothing hardly for the poor beas'es. Howsomever if they'll give us the corn bill, that may help us a bit."

"I take it, master," observed one of the labourers, "that will help the landlord more nor the tenant, and won't do us labourers no good. What we wants be cheap bread, and that we can't have with dear corn."

"Folk like we don't pretend to know nothing but what we feels," said the other man, as he mounted the straw, and began loading the cart; "but it's certain sure that farmers can't pay high rents to the squire and fair wages to the labourers. Bless you, the corn bill's only fittened to keep up rents; and so, what with machines and the loike of them, we poor fellows can't earn enough to keep ourselves, let alone our families, when we has any. To be sure, there be the parish, or county jail, to comfort us."

"Jail!" exclaimed his comrade; "times be nation changed since I were young. They have gotten their jails up loike squire's halls now, and the convicts live on the best of everything, whilst we as works for our bread can scarce

keep soul and body together. A jail be'ant no longer a jail as it should be."

"No, to be sure," answered the other, "thieves, poachers and wagabonds be condemned to what they calls hard labour. Why, bless you, they laughs at it, as they goes drawling one foot after another on the wheel, and is taken off to rest, and gets their bellies filled, and doctor's stuff, and warm clothing, and what not—a sight better than any of us.

"Aye, that's what the magistrates and gentlefolk calls humanity and the march of intellect," observed the farmer. "Now I says, let them as do ill, fare ill; let them as breaks the laws, smart by the laws. If half the money that's laid out in making rogues and vagabonds comfortable was spent in helping honest men to keep off the parish, why the farmers wouldn't be ground down with rates, and the labourers might eat meat twice a week instead of the felon. I'd keep every rogue in prison until he worked himself out, and paid for his keep."

"I don't know how it is," rejoined the labourer, "but as I said afore, times is awe-

somely changed since I was young. Now folk don't care a straw about going upon parish, and talks of Bridewell and work'us as if it were quite a Sunday place like. When I were a boy there weren't an honest man or woman in our hundred, but what would a died of shame to agone and asked relief only when they met with an accident, or such like.

"Talking of that, John," said the farmer, "I heard up at Salisbury, this morning, that there's been a fine mess at Thistle'us school about a lad, as they say came from a west-country work'us. He's been robbing a sight of gold, and got clear off with it."

My heart beat violently when I heard this, and the words fell as heavily upon my ear as the knell of some near church-bell.

"One of the servants loike, I reckons," said the younger labourer, as approaching the corner where I lay, he tossed off one of the upper sheaves.

"No, dang it," answered his master, "no—one of the scholards. A young chap what nobody knows nothing on. I met the consta-

bles up at Town-hall, and they said they'd got a magistrate's warrant to arrest him; but when they went to fetch him, the bird was bolted. He'd been let out of the house by one of them 'ere d——d frog-eating, French hemigreys, as they reckons."

"Such a chap desarves hanging, a sight worser than many a poor, famished cretur, what's driven to steal to keep his family from starving," answered the elder labourer; "and if I could nab him, dang it, he shouldn't hemigrey me."

"Be there any reward for cotching him," demanded the other man; "and what's he like in the face and body?"

"I doubt that there arn't no reward as yet," answered the farmer; "but that's all one; the sooner he's boxed and transported the better; for they say he was a most howdacious chap, what leathered the whole school, master and all. No one dared say goose is goose to him. Bless you! he could swim like a fish, scratch his ear with his toe, stand on his yead, play the fiddle, and do all manner of strange tricks. I doubt

as how he was a koind of mountebank, what goes round at fairs; but if he gets off, and runs his rigs a this un's, he'll swing some day."

"He a'n't born to be drowned, no ways," rejoined the second man; "I knows him roight well. He's got blue eyes and loight curly hair. I was up at Thistleburn mills with a load of wheat, when he jumped into the water like an otter, and fished up the two scholards' bodies. I helped to drag them out. Dang it, he was a brave lad, too; but I reckons, if one was to cotch him, they'd give one a guinea or so."

"No doubt, no doubt," replied the master, "because he's got a bag full of money belonging to the school; and what's worser, he robbed the poor servants of all their yearnings."

"If that's the rig, I'm blowed if I spare him, if so be as I lays hands on him. I wonders which road he took?"

"Why, I doubt he arn't far off," answered the farmer; "for Ned Sawyer told me just now, that, as he was going up to help my missis to bake an hour afore sunrise, somewhat black came bolting past him in Hag's-eye Lane, and

he were so fritted, he jumped into the ditch, and when he looked out, he see'd it were some one with a bag full of gold: he heard it chinking. I am sure it be the chap; for Ned said he bounded along like a stray buck from the chase; and then topped the stile as clean as one of Lord Rivers' greyhounds."

At this moment, the labourer pitched off a sheaf of wheat within a foot of my head, and the point of his fork grazed my temple. Detection being inevitable, I resolved to deliver myself up, and was just going to speak, when the farmer called out, "Hold! hold! John, that be more than we can carry; we sha'n't have time to load t'other wagon, it be past eight now, so we'll finish the job in the morning." Upon this the labourer descended, and, thank Heaven, in a few minutes they all departed.

Half suffocated with dust and insupportable thirst, I quickly crawled forth; my dread of discovery, and my determination to proceed as fast as possible to the sea-side, being increased by this conversation. At length, a thick fog enveloped the meadows, and the long-wished-

for shades of night fell upon the earth. I then stole cautiously down, ran to the brook, and drank with greedy avidity. I had often read of the desert travellers' and the ship-wrecked mariners' pangs for want of this precious element; but until then I never knew the inestimable luxury of a drop of water. After devouring my slender stock of provisions, as well as some cresses gathered from the rivulet, I started once more in a south-easterly direction, alternately walking and running, until near daylight, when I overtook the driver of a tilted wagon, whom I ventured to accost.

After scratching his head, and examining me with a suspicious look, as if I had been a footpad, he said that we were upon the high-road from Romsey to Southampton, which latter might be almost seven miles off. I was going to petition him for a ride in his cart, but, apparently, he had no relish for my company; for he gathered up his long whip, and, significantly pointing forwards, bade me brush off. Having proceeded some distance farther, I found myself in the middle of an extensive forest. As

the day was dawning, and I exceeding weary, I retired under the trees, and laid me down to rest. Here I had time to meditate upon my forlorn condition and miserable prospects. Chilled to the very marrow with the raw, morning air, hungry and nearly exhausted, I felt half inclined to return, and face the perils I had fled; but the dread of transportation overcame me, and I resolved to pursue my way. No creature could indeed be more desolate. I had heard of the horrors of a guilty mind, as well as the consolations of a pure conscience. Alas! though innocent, I could gather no consolation, but suffered all the terrors of the most guilty.

Thinking my name might betray me, I first took out my knife, and cut off the marks upon my linen, and then bethought me of a story to tell upon my arriving at the sea-port. Feeling myself becoming stiff, I rose at length, and proceeded on slowly, quitting the road, and hiding myself when I saw any one approaching. At last, I could no more, and again laid myself down under a sort of sheep-pen, and fell asleep. The sun had sunk when I awoke; but, as ill

fortune would have it, the night was gloomy and overcast: not a star was visible; so I had nothing for it but to endeavour to regain the road, and to seek shelter in some cottage. After floundering about for more than an hour without knowing in which direction I was going, I espied a light, which I hoped might be that of some house, where I might procure a crust of bread, for I was nigh famishing. This lent me fresh strength, and I pushed on; but, upon approaching close, I found it proceeded from the tents of some gipsies, who were encamped under the shelter of a shady lane.

Balancing between my dread of these lawless people, and my fear of perishing from cold and hunger, I crept behind a tree to examine the party, which consisted of an old man, three women, and some children. Much time was not afforded me for reflection; for, of a sudden, I heard the rush of footsteps, a brawny hand seized me by the collar, and I was dragged towards the tents by an athletic gipsey, who, it seems, had watched my manœuvre. In an instant, the whole party, dogs and all, surrounded

me, and, as my captor threw down a sack containing a dead lamb and other plunder, the elder gipsey exclaimed, "Why, what hast got there, Reuben, hast snared a lion instead of a lamb?"

"I have grabbed a wolf in sheep's clothing—a gallows bird, father," replied the other; "I have watched him for the last hour. He's set on to speer us; but if you'll hand me that cord, I'll cure him of doing sneak to the forest traps." Then, turning my arms behind my back with one hand, he squeezed my throat with the other until my eyes nearly started from their sockets.

"Hold! hold!" said the father, interposing, "thou'lst throstle the kid." Then, stirring up the fire until it cast a bright light upon my person, he added, "Hands off! hands off! thy grip be as tight as the dead noose; he don't look like one that would do so much harm to fowl or flesh, unless it were roasted."

"True, true," exclaimed the eldest of the women; "he's not rigged like a sneak; and thou must be an oozel, Reuben, not to see that

he'd be better pleased to have a slice of that lamb, than tell who grabbed it."

"Don't believe that, mother," retorted the other. "When I and Daniel had nabbed the bleat, and were coming out of Springford holt, we see'd the cove skulking under the sheep-pens a queering us. He's one of the farmers' sons, set on to track us with the swag, and unless you'd have me swing, we'd better hamper his prattle. I've left Dan behind to watch. You may do as you please with your gullet, but I won't risk mine for a song."

"You are wrong, you are wrong," said I; "I am a poor benighted lad, that has lost his road, and is perishing with hunger. I saw your light, and thought it was a cottage where I might beg shelter: I am a stranger to the country. I never set eye upon you until you laid hand upon me; all I want is to get on board a ship. God knows I am too much afraid of being tracked myself to think of watching others."

"There, there, didn't I tell thee so?" again screamed out the old woman.

"Hands off, Reuben," added her husband, "or thou'lst bring us into trouble. Thou hast sins enough to answer for, let alone cold-blooded murder: I'll have none of it."

"I've peered in more foreheads, Reuben, than thou hast hairs on thy bold one, and turned more hands than I have wrinkles in mine," exclaimed the old woman, "and never was deceived. He's no sneak, but one that's more afraid of Bridewell bars than thou beest, though, unlike thee, he's innocent. The spot of honesty is as white on his brow as Rachel's smock on her wedding-day." Then, taking up my left hand, and gazing earnestly as she bared my forehead, she continued. "The line of life is as long and mottled as the coiled serpent that tempted Eve; there's many a turn and dolesome passage; but no death by hemp, or fire, or sword; there's blood on it; but it's blood for blood, life for life; there's fresh water, and salt water, and tears more plentiful and bitter than either; there's a lady with eyes as dark as a negro's skin; but that's afar off; there's spots in the line of Venus, and a black

cloud hangs in Gemini. I see Mercury rising through the mist, dabbled in sparks of gold; but the gold isn't piled in coffers, it lies rusting in coffins. There's many a worm shall float and fatten on dainty flesh ere the furnace heats, and the dross melts from the pure metal."

"Mother!" exclaimed the son, impatiently, "don't stand pattering thy flash, whilst the rope's a-hanging over my neck, perhaps. It's no use to crack such gammon with us. If you and father won't let me snag the squeek, let's tether him to one of the forest trees."

"Cut his tether, I say, Reuben," rejoined the old woman, putting herself between her son and me: "give the poor, famished lad a drop of comfort. If thou layest hand on him again, as sure as I carried thee nine months in my womb, I'll curse the fruit it bore. I tell thee, the spot of truth's as clear as the driven snow, and, more than that, I know it is." Then, again fixing her eyes on me steadily, she added, "Yes, he that comforts the afflicted, he shall be comforted; he that saves, shall himself be spared; wrong for wrong, help for help. That

lad's born to better destinies than to die like a dog at thy hands. Dost love thy mother, Reuben?"

"Do I, mother? why thou needest not peer at my daddle to know that; that's why I'd hold him in pawn for our safety."

"What wouldst do, boy," replied the crone, "if thou seedest the village churls set their dogs upon the mother of Reuben Ben-Hamisch, —what wouldst do if they pelted her, defiled her with foul curses, and threatened her with a witch's death, because the stupid hinds swore she'd brought a murrain on their cattle?"

"Why, a murrain seize me, but I'd house my taster up to the haft in their paunches; I'd scrag the first devil's son that meddled with thee, though it were the king."

"I know thou wouldst," answered the old woman, smiling proudly. "Well, then, and what wouldst do for him that stepped forward, and, though young, frail, and girl-like, sprang amongst the bellowing curs, saved thy mother, gave her bread, and kind words sweeter than wheaten

cake, and spared him of his only shilling for her sake?"

"Do!" retorted Reuben, his countenance expanding with a gleam of generous fire, "do? why, I'd fight for him, swear for him; I'd stand atwixt him and all the beaks in hell; I'd cut him from the gallows-tree, though the devil with his claws on fire gripped at his chains."

"I know thou wouldst, lad," replied the mother, her dark eyes glistening with wild, maternal pleasure; "well, then, now's thy time: there he stands. He that I told thee on when we were camped on Thistleburn heath, the night thou lit the overseer's bonfire; yes, he and another fair-eyed boy. T'other crossed my hand, and I told his fortune; but not all. Alas, alas! I saw the black streak in his eye, a winding sheet, and a sexton's pick. Poor daisy, born like the meadow grass to be swathed down in the full summer's pride. Yes, they two fought for me, saved me; and all they got were cuffs and teachers' stripes; but they had my blessing. None of our tribe were ever ungrateful."

"Never, never!" shouted out the rest of the party; "let him want what he will, he shall have it."

Upon this, Rachel threw back her long, black locks with her hand, placed the other under my chin, and, kissing me on the forehead, said, "There's my bond of peace, as true as London bank."

"And there's my daddle," added Reuben; "and if so be you're hard-up, my clipper, and have bolted for some flash spice, I'll never split, though Beelzebub tempted me with a sack of shiners. Pass the night with us, and if Dan says all's right, we'll have a merry blow-out, a snug snooze, and afore daylight we'll waddle the pike, and I'll put you on your road to the water. My name's not Reuben if I don't help you as you helped mother." And so saying, he invited me to sit under his tent, and offered me some food, and a glass of brandy as a wet before supper.

I now recollected the cause of this timely interference. About ten days before the accident at the fall, William and I interposed in

favour of an old gipsey woman, who was being stoned and threatened by the villagers: an act of humanity which cost me a black eye, a shilling, and a severe flogging.

Many minutes had not elapsed ere one of the dogs, which slept near the fire, twitching and squeaking, as if dreaming of the chase, rose, pricked its ears, bristled his back, sniffed, growled, and slunk into the shade. Upon which Reuben exclaimed, in an under voice, "Dowse the glims, the beaks are a-hoof; I knows it by old Belcher's swagger." Then, crouching on all-fours, he followed the animal into the covert. In an instant, the fire was extinguished, an old wet sack was thrown over the embers, and silence commanded. It was marvellous to see the instinct with which even the little children bolted like rabbits beneath the tents, and lay as still as death. In a few minutes more, the tramp of horsemen was heard at no great distance: presently they approached nearer—still nearer, until they stopped at the corner of the lane in which we were concealed After a short pause, during which

we heard the click of a pistol, one of the riders exclaimed, "Well, I told you it would be of no use; if they are not here, they're bolted into Wiltshire, and our warrant don't go into t'other county."

"We may as well just ride down the lane, and see," said another voice.

"You may if you please," answered his comrade, "I won't; I got bogged there by sunlight t'other day, and I wont risk my neck for nothing now it's pitch dark. We've executed our duty; and you'd have done better if you'd have believed that old sailor, as told us he had seen the fellow that stole the horse a-racing on the road to Salisbury. You may take oath it a'n't one of old Adam's people: let alone a jackass or a sheep, they never flies higher."

"High or low," answered the other, "I can't see no signs of them here, they be hopped the twig that's sure; so we may as well be off; we have got a sharpish trot afore we get back home." And so saying, they rode a little farther on, halted, exchanged a few words, and then, putting spurs to their horses, galloped off.

The sound of their hoofs had scarcely died away, ere we heard a low, distant whoop, like that of a screech-owl: this was replied to in the same wild note, in the direction where Reuben had disappeared; and ere many minutes, the latter returned with a man dressed as a sailor, carrying a wooden-leg on his shoulder, from which were suspended a goose, and two or three other articles of plunder. This, it appears, was Daniel, who communicated his report in a jargon I could not comprehend. The result was evidently satisfactory; for they all laughed, chattered, and the new-comer offering me his hand, expressed the same good-will as the rest.

Whilst the younger gipsies were occupied in rekindling the fire, and preparing the night's meal, the old woman seated herself by my side, and said, "It's not for the like of one that can read the heavenly signs, and the lines on earthly hands as plain as letters on a highway-post, to ask questions;—take heed, then, I tell thee, how thou runnest from the fisher's hook into the shark's jaws. Thou'rt not the first stripling that has played truant, returned, and been for-

given. What's a teacher's passion to a parent's curse; what's the sting of a rod to the pangs of a father's heart? Thou talkest of getting a ship board; that were a wild and darksome prank, soon done—slow mended. Dost know the difference 'twixt lying upon the down pillow, listening to the rustling leaves, and clinging to the reeling yard-arm, amidst the yelling tempest?"

"I do, I do, mother!" replied I; "alas! I am no stranger to the sea."

"Thou dost! then take an old gipsey's warning—such life is not for one like thee. I've scanned thy hand, and cast thy star—thou'rt born to better fortunes. I told thee thou shouldst not die by hemp, by lead, or steel; but shun the waters. Thy sun may sink dark, long, and dreary; but 'twill rise anon with greater glory. There's English love and Spanish gold in store for thee. Thou wast born under a chequered sign; but Mars and Jupiter must have their strife, till Venus rise in the ascendant, and Saturn rule the square. Get thee back, get thee back, and not risk thy precious hopes for a mere scholar's prank."

" It is for no prank, no fault of mine, that I have fled, mother," answered I: " alas! I have no help for it: I have nothing left but a berth on ship-board."

" A berth board-ship, eh!" exclaimed the old woman, with a sort of scream that thrilled through me; " a berth quotha! say a death—a devil's death. A murrain on all ships, say I. There was my first-born, Adam, a braver and better lad than either of those two. Because he stood by his trust, and swore he'd save the run, dead or alive, the gaugers riddled him with shot, — a foul curse on them! Then they cured him, tried him, and gave him a berth on board a king's ship for mercy; but he, who had lived free as the forest bird, could not abide such mercy; so he sprang from the deck when the ship lay in harbour, and swam ashore. But they took him again, and ironed him; and in a mad moment, he struck the captain with his manacles: so they tried him again, and gave him what he wanted—liberty. I was not far away in a boat—I saw the flash, and heard the

gun; and, when I looked up, there he was dangling at the yard-arm; but I laid a spell upon the vessel, and was avenged. She sailed for the Indies, and foundered; three hundred and fourscore living souls—all perished. Heed thee, heed thee, then, ere it be too late, and get thee back to thy horn-book. Thou hast a proud heart; but the steel bears most that bends the easiest. If thou persist, I'll bind thee hand and foot, and take thee by force—it were a charity."

"Think not of that, I implore you," replied I, awed by the language of the old woman: "you say you can discover hidden events by the eye, by the hand; you must know that death were preferable to the fate that awaits me."

"Pooh, pooh," answered she, "thou art a lad of spirit, but beware how thou temptest fate too keenly. I tell thee, I would save thee."

"If you deliver me over to the school-master, a prison, or transportation, must be my lot," was my reply.

"What!" exclaimed she, again seizing my

hand; "I see no crime here. It is white and spotless. Thine eyes and forehead too—pure as the rising moon."

"I am innocent, mother, as that sleeping infant. But they will swear my life, my all away. I have no proof, no friends, to help me, unless by your art you can discover him that played me the foul trick."

"This is beyond my ken, boy," answered she, musing; "before I can aid thee, I must know all. Thou mayst trust me and mine through irons and gibbets. He's a traitor to our tribe, who'd breathe a word."

I then narrated the events of the last three days, upon which she shook her head, and said, "'Tis awesome—awesome. But there's hemp a turning now for one neck. I peered into the dare-devil's eye, as he drove me from the door, and saw the mark of Satan on his brow. Two uprights and a cross beam,—swing—swing, with the ravens' caw for his dying benison. Whee! whee! I hear the death-rattle gurgling in his wizzen, and the toad's echo. He'll not rot in a grave—not he. But that's not thy business.

I'll lay a curse on him." I trembled as the old woman thus boasted of her powers of divination and dominion over man's fate, and being naturally superstitious, nearly gave her full credit for all she said. After waving her fingers as if tracing the movement of the planets, she continued. "Hast thou no friends?—go home—go home. Think of thy desolate mother—of thy fond father, thoulst break their hearts, and bring double shame upon their grey hairs."

"Alas!" answered I, "I have no parents, and who will befriend the convicted thief? The poor French gentleman loves me, and believes me guiltless—but what can he do for me? No, I never will return, come what will; that is impossible."

"'Tis a black business, and I cannot gainsay thee. But do not seek thy fortune on the waters. Thou hast intelligence and courage beyond thy years. Hold then to the land. If our rude life doth not affright thee, take shelter here, until I send Reuben and Rachel to speer the signs; they'll take a letter to thy friend."

After considering awhile, I replied that I would

stay for a few days, but that I feared they would hunt me down and seize me.

"No danger of that," answered she, "we're off before sunrise towards Windsor forest. Besides, an thou willst, I'll change thee so that thou'dst pass thy mother's ken;" and she pointed significantly at a fine boy of eight or nine years of age, who lay rolling by the fire. "Here, Lilla," continued she, calling to one of the gipsey women, "bring me the brown juice, and the dark ointment, and off with this fine gear: I'll rig thee out with things more suited to our calling."

I was become so reckless, so bewildered, and at the same time so awed by the mystic language of the old woman, that I let her do as she pleased. I was moreover not sorry at being advised to abandon my scheme of going to sea, which I hated at heart. Rachel and Lilla now dipped a rag in the liquor and rubbed my face and hands, until they assumed a dingy saffron hue like that of the tribe; they then cut off all my curling hair, and poured the ointment over my head and eyebrows, combing it for a few

moments, and having unpacked their store of clothes, selected an old jacket, and other coarse articles, in which they attired me. They then presented me a small looking-glass, and I started back with surprise at seeing myself so completely metamorphosed.

Supper being ready, we set to work, and when it was over Reuben fetched an old violin, and scraped two or three miserable tunes, to which, however, the children danced, and the women listened with seeming pleasure. It was a wild and strange spectacle: and, as the red glare of the flames lighted up the countenances of the little urchins and their mothers, and showed the daring face and sinewy frame of the musician, I fancied myself a spectator of one of those scenes of mountain bandits, described by the inimitable Le Sage. Whether it was the liquor I had drank, or the natural buoyancy of the youthful heart, I know not, but I felt my spirits elevated, and thinking to win favour by exhibiting my musical talents, I begged Reuben to lend me his instrument, and drew forth tones to which they all listened with such delight, that

the old gipsey exclaimed, "Why thou hast an honest livelihood, lad, in that catgut. If I were thee, I'd send ships and books to the devil, and stick to that. I could play bravely once myself, and have earned many a pocketful of blunt at fairs and wakes: but I were never fit to hold a candle to thy music."

This was a new light burst upon me, and as I laid me down to rest, I determined to profit by the old man's hint. At length we all crept into our nests, trusting to the sagacity of the dogs to keep watch.

CHAPTER II.

A father presents himself when least expected—I lose the use of my speech and one eye by lightning, but produce great effect in Winchester with my fingers —I decide a wager, and hear a fashionable colloquy —Old Adam undertakes to be the guardian of my purse and person, and takes care I shall lose neither—I fall into very reverend company, and am much moved thereat—I become a sportsman, and am in at the death.

Before daylight, one of the gipseys roused me. The tents were struck, the donkeys loaded, and we started across the country in the direction of Winchester, in the neighbourhood of which we arrived soon after mid-day. Having selected a sequestered place upon the borders of some waste land for our encampment, the party made

preparations for entering the town; the two young women carrying baskets of wooden spoons, pincushions, and other small articles, and the men disguising themselves, one as a ballad-singer and the other as a rat-catcher. When they were gone, the old woman said, "Now, Jessop," for that was the name she gave me, "now it is thy turn. Take Reuben's fiddle. Thou hast but to draw thy bow, and I'll wager a silver crown thou'lt earn two."

"Hold, hold, a moment," exclaimed her husband, "I'll go with thee. Thou'lt not draw the shiners the less for leading thy old blind father, what lost his blessed eyesight from lightning. And if thou art struck dumb, filched of an eye by the same flash, it may save blowing thyself with thy scholard's patter."

Upon this he crawled under his tent, and presently came forth with flowing grey locks, his eyes reddened round the edges, turned up as if stone blind, and his dress had the air of that of a decayed tradesman. He then placed a black patch over one of my eyes, and we started. Although I trembled violently as we

entered the town, and fancied that every eye was searchingly fixed upon me, I walked on until we reached the high street, where observing two or three carriages with fine liveries, opposite a pastry-cook's shop, Adam stopped, and we saw a party of ladies and gentlemen inside. I now tuned my instrument, and, after playing one or two English dances, struck up a favourite Italian air of M. de Florennes. The pastry-cook had, it seems, no turn for auricular sweets, for he came to the door and throwing me a stale bun bade me march off, or he'd send for the beadle. But one of the ladies, as soon as she had cleared her throat of an oyster-patty, exclaimed, "O poor creatures! do not send them away; it must be so shocking to lose one's sight!"

"Except for those who wish to keep their hearts," said one of the gentlemen. "And yet love and justice are always represented blindfold."

"You have contrived to make a strange fellowship, out of compliment to yourself probably," observed a second gentleman drily.

"Dear me," continued the young lady, "the poor boy plays charmingly; it is that delightful air from the second act of the *Cosi fan' Tutti*."

"I beg your pardon," replied the first gentleman, "surely it is one of Bishop's."

"Who serves the music that falls into his possession much in the way that Sheridan says gipseys treat their stolen children," observed the second speaker.

"I wish it were not naughty to bet," exclaimed another lady, "and I would lay you both a wager that it is from Cimarosa. I ought to remember it, Sir Harry, for I heard it every night at the opera for nearly the whole season."

"Who shall decide when doctors disagree?" again observed the sarcastic baronet. "But you are quite right, the opera manager takes good care to afford us every opportunity of learning the music he gives us, by heart. One opera is considered sufficient for a London season, and one sauce sufficient seasoning for a London dinner."

" O you are dreadfully severe," ejaculated the whole bevy of ladies, to which the other answered, that it was the fashion now-a-days to accuse every man of being satirical who did not agree with his neighbour, or who did not utter as many sweet things as they were devouring.

" It may be very bold to dispute such authority as yours, my dear madam," answered the first gentleman, " but I would back the Grange, if I had it, to a cartshed, that it is Bishop's. However, if you like, I'll bet you six pair of gloves to one."

" Done, done !" rejoined the lady.

" I hope his uncle the prebend has a better chance of a mitre than he has of proving that to be Bishop's," said Sir Harry; and then turning to me, he added, " Now, my boy, play that last air again, and tell us whose it is, if you can."

" My poor lad can't tell—he's stock dumb, please your honour," exclaimed the old gipsey. " The same flash of lightning that darkened my precious sight, tied his poor tongue, and cut out his eye, and he then rolled about the whites of his own, and began to cry and moan bitterly."

"Poor creatures! poor creatures!" said the young ladies, "it's very shocking! so he cannot tell us?"

"O my dear," rejoined the elder one, "how could you suppose that a poor strolling beggar should know the names of any composers, even if he could speak? He has picked it up from some organ-player."

"Ah!" said the baronet, with a malicious look, "it is really quite melancholy to see the manner in which harmony and knowledge are being filtered through the country, by cheap publications and wandering virtuosi. This is trenching rather too far upon the privileges of the higher orders. I would have every book under a quarto or royal octavo burned in Smithfield, and as for your retailers of music, I'd have them scratched to death with tom-cats, or drummed out of the parish. The day will come when we shall see the milkmaids filling their pails whilst they sing Billington's bravuras, and the ploughboys accompanying them with Italian recitative. The social edifice is being certainly turned upside down."

In the meantime I swallowed the dry bun, and, recommencing the air, added two or three variations, and then pointed, with all the eagerness and expression of a dumb person, first to my instrument, and then to the lady who had laid the wager, making signs that she was right. Upon this she clapped her hands, cried "Bravo, bravo! da capo!" and putting her beautiful fingers, covered with hoop rings into her purse, threw me half-a-crown. The elder lady now addressed herself to my supposed father, asking him how I came to play so well, and how an illiterate dumb boy could know the works of different masters?

"O, God bless your ladyship," replied he, "my poor child wasn't always dumb, and afore I met with my misfortune, we were well to do in the world. It killed his poor dear mother;" —and again the old rogue began to blubber, pinching my arm to follow his example. But I never had a turn that way, and my eyes remained as dry as two walnut-shells.

"Ah, my dear madam," exclaimed the gentleman who had lost the wager, "cannot you

twig? It's a hoax, you may depend upon it. I'll bet anything, it's some one begging through the country for a wager. Didn't you see, in the Morning Post, that a Mr. A. B. was travelling all over England disguised as a musician, having engaged to play the violin, and gain a certain sum of money in a given time, for a bet of five thousand pounds?"

"It is not at all improbable," rejoined Sir Harry. "We English are strange creatures—anything for a wager. Conceive of a man with five thousand a year tramping all over the country for the mere pleasure of winning five hundred pounds by scraping upon a fiddle and extracting charity that might better be disposed of elsewhere. It is enough to make one shut one's purse-strings, and harden one's heart, against every beggar, unless he could produce his certificate of indigence. All I can say is, that if I were to catch Mr. A. B. I would give him a night's rest in the stocks."

"And serve him right," exclaimed old Adam, "that's a robbing of us poor creatures."

"Oh, I reward the talent and not the indivi-

dual, and I think there's something very romantic in Mr. A. B.'s adventure," observed the elder lady. "What a pity he does not publish it; it would make a charming tale for an annual. But let us cross-examine the poor old man."

They then asked him many questions, to which he replied in a very explicit manner, saying that "I was the only child left of a numerous family, who had all died when he was cast into prison for debt; that he had been in respectable business as a slop-seller at Gosport until he lost his eye-sight, going aboard one of the ships at Spithead, where I was accompanying him to play the fiddle to the sailors; that he had been ruined, and was now helpless; and as I had played at the Portsmouth theatre, he was making his way up to London, where he had a brother, and hoped to procure me an engagement at one of the play-houses, and then he should lie down and die in peace." And hereupon he fell to and blubbered after a most moving fashion.

This story had the effect of opening all the ladies' purses, and now the satirical baronet

added his quota. I was going to give them another Italian air which I recollected, when up came Rachel with a child on her back, and another, which I suspected to have been stolen, by her side. After giving the former the inevitable pinch, and making it utter sounds very different from my music, Rachel curtsied and said, "Shall I tell you your fortune, ladies? If you'll cross my hand with a silver token, I'll tell you the age of the gentleman that loves you—whether he's rich or poor, short or tall—blue eyes or black—whether he's old or young. I'll tell you whether it's luck you'll have with your husband—a long wiving or a merry widowhood. There's money-bags in your eye, ma'am, as sure as the jewel on your finger. There's a golden coronet in your star, ma'am, and one that's smarting for love as you don't think on. God bless your sweet face, give a poor gipsey woman with five helpless children something to buy bread. I arn't had no luck this day. As true as the beautiful nose on your pretty face, miss, you'll be a mother yourself afore next Michaelmas twelvemonth."

This produced a titter amongst the party, and the young lady's mamma seemed no ways displeased at a prophecy which portended an early marriage: for she laughed and said, "My dear, do for fun let her tell your fortune."

I saw one of the whitest hands in the world held forth, and would liked to have heard the sequel, but old Adam, after blessing all their eye-sights, and their charity, to a poor broken-down, honest old man, bade me move on. I know not whether the good citizens of Winchester are peculiarly susceptible to the powers of music, but Orpheus never produced greater effect amidst the walls of Thebes than I in the classic town, whence unfortunately all the scholars were absent for the holidays. Perhaps their attention might have been excited by the gentleman's supposition that I was a rich man carrying on a hoax, and thus, with wonderful consistency they accorded to my superfluities that which they would probably have refused to my necessities.

Be that as it may, doors and windows were opened. Heads protruded from every alley,

and I was stopped at each respectable house and shop, and obliged to exhibit my skill, until my fingers were wearied. At length, when it was quite dark, we made our escape upon the London road, and returned by a circuitous path to our camp, not without my having nearly dropped from terror as we passed the market-place; for I there cast my eye upon a handbill, in which I saw myself described as a thief, and offering twenty pounds reward for my apprehension. But, having stood this test, the gipseys said I had nothing to fear.

The same disguise and success attended us at Alresford, Alton, and Farnham. At the latter place, the bishop's servants, who were drinking and swearing at the public-house, little mindful of their master's precepts, advised us to go up to the palace, as they were sure his lordship, who was fond of music and very charitable, would give me something, especially if I could strike up "a bit of a hoary-tory, or some'at church like."

I don't know whether the irreverent menials alluded to his lordship's politics; but I took

their advice. Fortunately, I remembered something from Handel: so when I approached the windows, I commenced playing, first, to the great surprise of the numerous peacocks, who set up a tremendous chorus, and then, to that of the ladies and gentlemen who were walking in the beautiful grounds. My execution appeared to afford them great pleasure, and when the good bishop heard our story, and found that I was dumb, he expressed his sympathy at our misfortunes, and said it was a pity that so much talent should be thrown away. "It is not much in my province," observed his lordship, "to deal with such matters; but had it not been for the dreadful visitation with which divine Providence has visited thee, poor boy, I would have exerted my interest to have placed you amongst the choristers at Winchester, or at St. George's, Windsor. All I can do is to recommend you to the notice of some of my family, who are great lovers of the art, and acquainted with many of the first musical professors in the metropolis. It would be better that you should be apprenticed to one of

these, and if you are honest and diligent, you may one day become a man of celebrity, like Vacari, Viotti, Linley, and other great artists; and I shall be gratified in thus being instrumental in having rescued you from a course of life, which must, I fear, end badly. Alas!" said the worthy man, "how much talent, how much merit is constantly thrown away for want of an occasion to display itself, or for want of judicious and charitable protection! How true is the saying of Pliny, 'No man's abilities are so resplendent as not to require a proper opportunity, a patron, and even the applause of friends, to recommend them to public notice.' If you have any regard for the worldly welfare or future salvation of this poor boy," continued his lordship, addressing old Adam, who, as usual, pretended to be grievously moved, "let him not continue in the career of idleness attendant upon this strolling life. I like his ingenuous countenance, and cannot help acknowledging his merits as a performer. It is true, I am no great judge of profane music, but my sons and daughters are. He shall have music

books set before him, and if they corroborate my judgment, we will see what can be done for him. In the mean time, go and refresh yourselves in the servants' hall, and after dinner we will send for you."

Old Adam lost no time in God-Almighty-blessing his lordship's eye-sight; and, walking after me towards the hall, his mouth watering this time much more than his eyes; for a very grateful odour of Irish stew and other dainties fell upon his keen scent, and he whispered to me, "D—— my eyes, though I says it that shouldn't, if we don't have a proper blow-out. We've fixed the old kiddy nicely. I knows the servants live like fighting-cocks: it's always the way with bishops' tags-men."

After a repast that would have done honour to a squire's table, but at which the lazy, purple-clad varlets seemed to turn up their noses, saying, "It was the second time that week they'd had a pea-polt for dinner," I was summoned to the drawing-room. Here I found musical instruments and books prepared; and, being asked what I knew, I turned over the

pages, and pointed to three or four pieces, which M. de Florennes had taken great pains to teach me, and played them to the great satisfaction of the bishop's family, who accompanied me upon different instruments. Oh! it was a beautiful sight, to see this worthy and benevolent family stooping from their high condition to attend to the notes of a poor, dumb wanderer. Dumb! I inwardly cursed myself for the deception; but I dared not reveal the truth. It was a heavenly sight to look upon the benign countenance of this venerable servant of God, sitting in his own chair, beating time with one hand, as he gazed with parental tenderness and contentment upon his children, and then upon the wretched outcast to whom he was willing to extend his protection. I was not prone to weep, but my eyes gushed scalding tears, and my hands trembled, when I thought of my fallen condition. Bitterly did my conscience rebuke me, when I reflected that I was repaying this benevolence with hypocrisy, and that I was an impostor, the helpmate of

hoary vice, the associate of midnight plunderers.

After more than an hour spent in this way, the bishop consulted with his son, and then calling his secretary, dictated two or three letters to friends in London; and then, summoning my supposed father, delivered them into his hands with a few shillings, recommending us to make the best of our way to the metropolis. He now dismissed us, and we returned to our camp, I with the firm determination to escape as soon as possible from a mode of life that disgusted me, and old Adam probably with resolutions of a contrary nature: for my success had been so great, that had it not been for their inveterate habits of wantonness and plunder, the band might have been supported honestly by my earnings. I was a mine of wealth, which I soon perceived they were not inclined to let fall into other hands, as they not only kept all the money I received, but constantly watched my person. I had a foretaste of this on the same evening; for Adam

lit his pipe with the bishop's letters, and when I remonstrated, he said, "That I was his apprentice now, and must make up my mind to the consequences; he was not going to let me off in order to purchase my pardon with showing up their rigs: that would be doing Jack Catch to his own music." This, however, did but augment my resolution to escape upon the first opportunity.

At length, after traversing Farnborough and Bagshot, when, to judge by the contents of our larder, the ducks, geese, and poultry, were not insensible to the charms of music, we struck across the heath by Swinley to the neighbourhood of Bracknell, and pitched our tents in a beautiful lane near Lord Downshire's park. Here our band awaited another tribe, in order to celebrate the marriage of Lilla Ben-Hamisch with one of their young men, my earnings being added to the dark-eyed damsel's dowry.

Here we spent our time as usual, until the arrival of Lilla's future husband, passing the nights in wild carousals, or plundering expeditions, and the day in levying contributions upon

the neighbourhood. Adam, who now scarcely allowed me out of his sight, made me accompany him to the different gentlemen's seats round Warfield, Birfield and Sunning Hill, where my fiddle and his deplorable story were sure to produce a rich harvest. At length the tribe of Lilla's sweetheart joined us. The marriage day was settled, and in order to do honour to the festival the depredations of the gang increased two-fold. The preserves of Squire Crutchley furnished us with pheasants; those of Lord Devonshire, and Sir John Walch with hares; whilst Lord Braybrooke's park produced us two fine bucks. These were not consumed by us, but found a ready market upon the Bagshot-road, where they were picked up by the guards and coachmen of the southern mails and coaches, who in a few hours disposed of the plunder to the London dealers.

A large order of game, which was wanted for some civic feast, having been given by a friendly coachman, the gipseys, whose number now amounted to six, determined to celebrate the wedding eve by a grand forage in the Sunning-

hill-park. As resistance was expected from the keepers, our men armed themselves with guns or bludgeons, and proceeded by different paths across the forest. I would fain have remained behind, hoping to avail myself of their absence to escape to London with the fiddle, but I was ordered to carry a sack for the dead game. Upon reaching the park-palings, the gang were mustered; the most skilful being selected for the purpose of noosing or funking the pheasants from their perches, and for laying snares in the hares' runs, and the most determined to watch for the keepers. The signal of alarm was the well-known owlet's cry. I was ordered to lie down in a drain and keep a good look-out.

It was a boisterous, but clear night, well suited to the purpose: the moon's rays lit up the summit of the trees and showed the birds at roost, whilst the underwood was enveloped in shade, and the rustling of the foliage prevented our footsteps from being heard. I had remained more than half an hour, listening with a beating heart to the sighing of the wind through the trees, and watching the varying shades as the

moving branches waved to and fro, when suddenly a shot fell at no great distance. I strained my eyes and ears, but could neither see nor hear anything, save now and then the shrill cry of some pheasant disturbed from his perch. Presently, however, I observed five men with two large mastiffs emerge from the covert of a dark dingle and advance cautiously, following a smaller dog, which ranged in front. I tried to give the signal, but my tongue clove to my mouth, for the dog was within five yards of me, snifting and eagerly wagging its tail. In a moment more I heard the owlet's screech, and the dog suddenly striking a loud bay, bounded past me into the covert. By this time the keepers halted at my side; I saw them distinctly—five athletic men. They cocked their guns, unloosed their mastiffs, and the leader said in an under tone, "Bill will wind them as sure as a gun, if they be in the county."

"Hark to her!" whispered the other; "she's on it."

"Ay, that's it," rejoined the head keeper; "now, lads, no firing, unless they fires first;

butt-ends, and nothing else. The watcher said he see'd six of them and a cub cross the heath. If we meet, let every one of us tickle his man from right to left, and leave t'other to Caliban and Bang." At this moment, the blood-hound set up a loud yell, to which the keeper echoed, "There they be: she has 'em. Now, lads, stand up like men—forward,"—and on they went.

The moon now emerged brilliantly from behind a cloud, illuminating the drive in which they were advancing, and showed me Lilla's future husband defending himself against the two mastiffs. In a moment more, Daniel and the rest of the gang flew to his assistance, and drew up across the green sward. The keepers followed their example, and the two parties paused awhile, apparently measuring each other's strength. At length the first keeper called out, "Stand and surrender, every mother's son of you, or we'll make you."

"Make be d——d," roared out Reuben, who stood forward, and pointing his gun. "Twenty such badger hides can't do that."

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"Then down with your guns, and stand up like Englishmen, and we'll soon see that," retorted the other.

"None of your chaw-bacon gammon, old cock," replied Reuben. "No, I tell you fairly, if ever a devil's dog of you move a hand or foot to stop us, we'll cram your bellies full of number four. No, old hare's scent, we're too many for you this bout, so let's pass peaceably, and blow me if we don't treat you handsomely, next-come-never fair."

"We'll see that," said the keeper, who with the rest of his men now sprang forward.

Reuben was, however, as good as his word. He raised his piece, cried out "You will, will you?" fired, and lodged the contents in the keepers body, who merely exclaimed, "At 'em lads, I'm done for!" reeled, staggered, and fell upon his back. Upon this his comrades, who were determined men, levelled their guns, and shot Reuben and another gipsey, and then rushing forward with desperate courage, put the others to flight. Having secured their two wounded prisoners, they returned to their leader,

whom I had seen expire after a few convulsive quivers, and ere many minutes they proceeded towards the mansion, many of whose inmates had now arrived to their assistance.

Nearly two hours had elapsed ere I ventured to crawl from my lair, and, making all possible speed, returned to our camp. But not a vestige remained, save a few tattered rags, and expiring embers. All were fled, and with them my clothes, my watch, and what few halfpence they had left me. What to do I knew not. I had neither the power nor heart to follow them, so I sat me down, and raking some of the dying cinders together, attempted to warm myself, resolving to beg my way back to Farnham, and then to throw myself upon the bishop's mercy. I had not sat long, however, before I heard voices, and looking round, I saw the keepers with their blood-hounds in a leash.

The hare does not spring more quickly from its form, or the hart bound more rapidly over the plain, than did I across the adjoining meadow. But my speed was of little avail. In a few seconds the dog opened its hollow bay. I heard

a shout of "There's the cub! to him, Bell! to him, wench!" and before I had made ten strides she was at my heels. I dared not look behind, but rushed onward at my utmost speed. It was useless, for in an instant more a blow from a cudgel felled me to the ground.

CHAPTER III.

That bird that sings in yonder cage, that bird sings notes of sorrow—Old friends with new faces—It is proved that justice is not always blind—I become a member of the Stock Exchange; but am consoled in an unexpected manner—After a ride in very unsavoury company, I receive a second-hand suit of clothes—The Pythagorean doctrines exemplified in my person.

The first words which regaled me upon regaining my feet, were "Blow me, Bill, if this isn't the one-eyed, dumb kid, that played the fiddle down at Red Lion. Dang it, he have got back his peeper; so we'll see if he can't find his tongue."

"Hang him for a gipsey cub," exclaimed another; "his legs be as nimble as his fingers: but he loaded his gun with the wrong number,

if he thought he could tip the brush to Will Raddle."

"Come, young Jack Snipe," continued the first, "give tongue, and tell us where the rest of the gang be: we won't hurt you, so be you'll put us on the right scent." To this I made no reply; upon which he exclaimed, "Oh, you won't speak, won't you? None of your sham Abrahams: you arn't more dumb than squire's cockers,"—and he then gave me a severe cut with his dog-whip. But, being resolved not to betray my imposture, at least to these men, I continued silent, and he proceeded flogging me unmercifully, until a third person, who I afterwards discovered to be a constable, interfered, saying,

"Come, come, Jem, it's no use welting him after that fashion; besides, it isn't law. If so be the lad's tongue's tied, you'll not loosen the knot with your thong; and if you could, he wouldn't split: them gipseys be as close as Bridewell locks. Why, there's the two wounded men up at hall, you might as well try and hammer fire out of a bit of heath-bog with my staff as cross-question a word out of them."

"But I'll take my bible oath he's one of the

covey," answered the other; "I saw them all jugging here t'other evening, and him amongst 'em: what's more, I be certain he's guilty; for I think I see'd him cross the heath by the race-stand just afore they got into the park."

"I a'n't been constable twenty-five years," replied the other, "for nothing: I knows what's law. You a'n't no right to strike him, deaf or dumb, innocent or guilty. According to English law, every man's innocent until he be found guilty. Why, bless you, there a'n't a judge in the land that does not tell a prisoner to plead the general issue, and do the best he can for himself. Now, I knows my duty as well as any magistrate, and say he a'n't no right to criminate himself afore trial. Though I've a warrant to take them all up on suspicion, I won't stand no assaults nor battery: that's actionable, and so I'll do my duty, and leave the rest to law."

"Well, I won't dispute with you, Master Hedgehome," replied the keeper's man, "about law and such like; but if you'd been walloped as we have been by these d—d poachers, you wouldn't be so over nice about taking the law into your own hands. We'll make sure of him

at any rate." Upon this they tied my arms behind me, led me to Bracknell, and lodged me in the cage, stating they should proceed to acquaint the magistrates of my caption.

It was now broad daylight. Ere long, my place of confinement was the rendezvous of all the village gossips, who assembled at the adjacent blacksmith's shop to discuss the sorrowful issue of the last night's adventure. Some of them, as they stared at me through the iron grating, abused me for a young slip-gibbet, and said I looked as if half the parish poultry was cackling in my stomach; others swore I had the gallows written upon my face, and that the best thing for such as me, was a jump from Reading drop; others, more humane, commiserated my youth and dumbness. One or two declared I had neither the look nor gait of a regular tramper, and that, no doubt, I was some stolen child, whose tongue the never-do-wells had hampered, that I might not tell of their doings, or of my own abduction: another, it was the constable's wife, brought me a piece of bread and a draught of milk, observing, it was a sad thing to see one, that was not a gipsey born, follow such evil courses; that if I got out of

this scrape, I ought to try and gain an honest livelihood, or I should end my days in a jail.

My situation was indeed deplorable. Bitterly did I now lament the unfortunate fatality by which I had been induced to abandon my project of going to sea, and to associate myself with the wretches, who, in despite of the old woman's protestations, had held me a prisoner, and made me the unwilling witness of their guilt. Placed between Scylla and Charybdis, I knew not what to do, being reduced to the miserable dilemma of remaining silent, and of being taken up as an accessory to the keeper's murder, or of speaking, and avowing myself a vagabond impostor and runaway thief. Had my worldly experience been more extensive, or had I been endowed with greater moral courage, I had not hesitated; but, paradoxical as it may appear, a mistaken sense of honour led me astray, and I resolved to persevere in my feigned dumbness.

It was near mid-day when the constable returned, unlocked the cage-door, put handcuffs upon my wrists, and, bidding me mount by his side in a taxed cart, drove off, as I supposed, in the direction of Reading jail. We continued our course for three or four miles in silence,

until we approached a handsome-looking mansion seated in the midst of some beautiful shrubberies. My conductor then said, "That's his worship's house; there be several of them assembled; now, if you be not deaf as well as dumb, take my advice, and don't do nothing to muffle yourself. The two wounded gipseys have swore black and blue that you had no hand whatever in the business, and that you never stole so much as a feather in all your life. They confessed shooting poor Simons in self-defence, as they calls it, and will stand their trial: so now you hold your own. There isn't a crumb of evidence against you, only Will Raddle thinking he saw you on the heath. And as I said to the magistrates, 'Your worships,' says I, 'if I may be so bold, one think's as good as another, and I don't think that ere dumb chap, what's in cage, be one of the regular gang, only borrowed like, to play on the fiddle for the she-gipsey's wedding: if he'd been one of their party, he wouldn't have staid in the lane a warming his fingers when the rest bolted; for them gipseys, when they be just out of the nest, be like young stoats: they've a kind of hinstinck, and knows what's what afore they

can speak, a sight better than many grown-up Christians. Now, your worship,' says I, 'I've been constable in this parish more than twenty-five years, and have had all manner of virmin in my custody, and if so be as the lad be examined, and can make himself 'telligable, your worship will see he'll prove innocent—that's my verdict.'"

I inwardly thanked the good-natured constable for his advice, and did the best by nodding to express my feelings. We now entered the gates, drove up to the back of the house, and I was shortly ushered into the justice-room, where two of the keepers, and other persons, were assembled. In the course of a few minutes the door opened, and, to my utter consternation, who should make his appearance amongst the magistrates, but my old acquaintance, Mr. Scentwell, the Vicar of ———, who, as Mr. Steers had informed me in one of his letters, had been collated to a canon's stall in Windsor, had left Leicestershire, and taken a house near the Forest. The moment I saw him, I thought myself lost; but he scarcely noticed me, and, with his brother worships, seated himself at a table, upon which lay Burn's

Justice, Cook's Digest, a Testament, and other books necessary for the functions of a country justice. A sallow youth, dressed in threadbare black, acted as clerk. At his elbows lay two guns, a quantity of snares and nets, three or four twenty-feet perches, jointed like fishing rods, with strongly sulphuretted matches affixed to the upper ends, a dark lanthorn, and other poaching *spolia opima*, the produce of the night's conflict.

The three justices whispered together for a short time, nodded their heads, and looked exceedingly solemn; and, although there was nothing very divine in their appearance, I was as much awe-stricken as though I had been before the last judgment seat. At length Mr. Scentwell, who, it seemed, had been discussing his favourite sporting topics, and not the matter before him, exclaimed, "Apropos of cub-hunting, place the young fox opposite the table, and let us complete the depositions: we must try and bag the rest of them."

The aspen leaf does not tremble more violently at the rude caresses of the eastern winds, than did I at the voice and steady gaze of my old acquaintance. I had grown from a mere boy

into a tallish stripling; my features were changed and disfigured with care, dirt, and the gipseys' dye; my hair, once light and curling, was now lank, and black as jet, and I was altogether so metamorphosed, as scarcely to retain a single vestige of my former self. But, notwithstanding this, there was something in my appearance that instantly awakened ancient recollections in Mr. Scentwell: for, as he was about to call on my captor to give his evidence, he paused, stood up, fixed his eyes searchingly upon me, and exclaimed, "Brother magistrates, I think I know more of this whelp than you are aware of. Two stirrups are not more like one another, than he to a boy of bad character, whom I recollect in Devonshire. Sirrah!" added he, "you are not dumb;—this imposture will not avail you. I have no doubt in my own mind—you are Jack Penguin."

I had sufficient presence of mind to make no other reply than a vacant stare and a negative shake of the head. "Oh! this will not do," continued he; "I shall not be thrown off the scent, though you feign as mute as a pointer: the ends of justice must not be defeated."

"Nor the cart's tail either," interposed one

of the others. "Suppose we prescribe a dose by way of a stimulant: many remarkable cures have been effected in similar cases by pain, fright, or the other contingencies producing sudden re-action upon the nervous system. I remember a boy, struck dumb by lightning, who recovered his speech by tumbling into a millstream; a girl, who lost her speech from being tossed by a bull, regained it by her petticoats taking fire at the kitchen range; and a third, dumb-stricken by the sudden braying of a donkey in a churchyard, was restored by being chased by a pack of harriers as he returned from the apothecary's with a bottle of aniseed. Therefore, if I were consulted professionally, I should advise some pungent application, which, by acting collaterally upon the thyroïdal cartilages and buccinator, might thence dissipate any temporary impediments, and restore the pharynx and bronchial passages to their proper functions; that is to say, if the malady be not decidedly chronic. Speaking metaphorically, there appear to be a continuity of solution, an accumulation of phlogiston in this case, which requires the vigorous application of humeral embrocations."

"The experiment would do well enough in the land where Lynch law is resorted to as a proof of liberty," observed the third gentleman; "but here we are under the tutelage of milder statutes, and must be guided by evidence and facts. The previous character or position of the unfortunate lad has little connexion with the business *ad hoc:* antecedents must be left for another tribunal, when they will be taken either in mitigation or aggravation, in the event of our having sufficient grounds for committal."

"Sufficient grounds!" exclaimed Mr. Scentwell; "do you doubt the stars being fire, as Shakspeare says?—why the keeper's man had a view holloa of the young cub as he crossed the heath; and, although we may not have evidence of any direct participation in last night's crime, I consider the fact of his imposture and connexion with the gang, as quite enough to warrant our committing him as a vagabond."

"We must prove the imposture and identity first," replied the other gentleman; "and if he persists in his silence, I do not see how that is to be accomplished. As regards the first, none of the witnesses ever heard him speak. As to the other, it is possible, Mr. Scentwell,

you may be mistaken. There exist many melancholy instances when justice has been betrayed into error by such striking personal affinities as have deluded the most minute scrutiny. I appeal to our learned colleague, the doctor, if such coincidences are infrequent."

"In the course of my practice I have met with three or four singular instances of personal resemblance," replied the magisterial Æsculapius. "*Nam exemplo*, many years past I was called in to attend a worthy citizen, whom I found labouring under a complication of maladies, and exhibiting some very rare symptoms of pathological disorganisation. His case being hopeless, I was exceedingly anxious to gain possession of his body for dissection. However, as the developement of the disease would render the operation more interesting to science, I did my best to keep him alive. But because I restricted the quantum of spirits to which he was miserably addicted, we quarrelled, and he employed some one else. Having calculated that he would succumb in about a month, I went into the country and left two body-snatchers to keep a sharp look-out. On passing through Cheltenham a fortnight after, who should I see,

however, but my estimable citizen, drenching himself with water, as a tardy antidote to the sea of spirits with which he had ruined his constitution. As we passed, I stared at him, and he at me. But as he had dismissed me without ceremony, I cut him living, as a foretaste of my posthumous intentions. Three days after, he was missing at the pump-room. I saw the vehicles of four physicians at his door, and concluded, *nil nisi bonum de fratribus*, that he was at his last gasp. He was so. I then returned forthwith to London, sent off two expert hands to attend his funeral, and in a few days received my subject."

"Do not you think we are wandering from ours, gentlemen?" exclaimed the third magistrate.

"A moment, a moment, and you will find I shall arrive at the point in question," answered the doctor. "As I was sitting in my study the same evening, expecting a professional friend, I heard a rap at my door. It opened, and on turning round, who, in the name of all Surgeon's Hall, should enter, but my corpse: dressed, but as blue and livid as the grave. My hair stood on end, a cold chill crept through my veins, and

I started back, as terrified as Lepperello at the sight of Don Juan's granite guest. My alarm increased when he gave a hollow moan, and approached—'Come, come,' said my unearthed and unearthly visitor, as he saw me stagger to the fire-place to seize the poker; 'do not think I am come to rob you as these d—d doctors have me of my precious life.' I was nearly palsied with terror. I had little faith in apparitions, and was familiar with death; but there the livid figure stood, fixing its glassy eyes upon me. 'Why, doctor,' continued he, 'you seem as frightened as if you saw a ghost. I am not dead yet—but no thanks to those infernal doctors.' O, thought I, he was buried in a state of lethargy, has recovered, and will now show me up as a body-snatcher. Whilst I stood staring at him in a state of extraordinary perplexity, he proceeded. 'Dead or alive, I like to do every man justice. I turned you off because I thought you mistook my case, but I have got worse under your successors' hands, so I am come to ask you to try again. By-the-bye, I am as thirsty as a coal-heaver, and shou'dn't mind a drop of something from your cool cellar:' and he grinned horribly. O, thought I,

here we have it. All this is mere raillery; I am discovered. 'Come, come,' continued he, 'don't look so queer, I am changed, and no wonder. Those confounded fellows crammed me full of lunar caustic, and have turned me as blue as the boar in Holborn. But what's done can't be undone. So in God's name go down to the cellar, bring up a bottle of old port, and we'll talk the case over.' Utterly confounded, but happy to escape for a moment, down I went. With a palpitating heart I opened the door, and then, with mixed astonishment, and satisfaction, I found my Cheltenham corpse stretched as I had left it. I paused for some time to assure myself that I was not mistaken, and then carefully examined the countenance. A plaster mould of the dead man's face could not have borne greater resemblance to the visage than did the ghastly features, over which I held the candle, to him above stairs. Having assured myself of this fact, and being now convinced that I had been deceived at Cheltenham by this extraordinary resemblance, I recovered my equilibrium, and returned to my visitor. Bref. The dead man was nothing more or less than the fac-simile of my former patient, who, in spite

of my counsels, returned to his old libatory habits, which shortly conducted him to his grave, and thence into the dissecting room."

"Two birds with one barrel, eh, doctor," said Mr. Scentwell: "but now, as you have run your two friends to ground, let us unkennel ours."

"The case appears extremely simple," observed the third justice. "We have only slight circumstantial evidence of his being a party to the crime. Keepers, can you swear to his being the boy whom you saw upon the heath?"

"No, sir," replied the man, "but I and others can swear to his fiddling with the old blind fox, and I see'd him sitting in the camp when all the trampers was dancing and shouting like mad. I can't take oath, but I haven't no doubt he's one and the same."

"Before we commit the lad as an accessory to so heinous a crime as murder," continued the other, "we ought to proceed with caution. Hasty committals, without a fair prospect of conviction, are detrimental rather than advantageous to the ends of justice, and independent of their hardships upon the persons incarcerated,

do but add to the burthen of the community, which you will admit are sufficiently heavy."

"But he is an impostor, a vagabond," exclaimed Mr. Scentwell.

"He certainly is either dumb or not dumb," rejoined my compassionate advocate. "In the one case, sending him to prison instead of the asylum will not untie his tongue. In the other, we have no means of proving his imposture."

"I beg your pardon, Captain Loveman," said Scentwell. "I will write to my attorney in Devonshire, and desire that measures may be adopted to trace his steps after quitting that county. In the meantime my conviction is so strong——"

"That you would forestal his," retorted the captain.

"No!" replied the other, "but I will take upon myself to order his committal, as a temporary measure. Clerk, make out the mittimus."

"Supposing there were not sufficient circumstantial evidence to substantiate the *particeps criminis*," said the doctor, "we are bound, I think, to send him to prison. The sudden

recovery from monopsia, if I may be permitted the expression, affords us ocular demonstration of his being an impostor. A few weeks' tread-mill may produce the same effect upon the epiglottis. It is high time to put an end to the depredations upon the neighbouring poultry-yards."

"Preserves, sir, you mean," exclaimed the sporting clergyman.

"I almost wish there were none in the country," replied the captain. "My short experience in the commission has proved to me that the multiplication of game and the crimes resulting from their illicit destruction, have increased in a corresponding ratio."

"You will soon see your wish accomplished," answered Mr. Scentwell. "In a short time there will not be a hare or pheasant left. The existing game-laws are utterly inefficacious. Poaching is now carried on with an audacity unparalleled in former times. This does not arise from the augmentation of preserves, but from that of the pseudo-philanthropists of the day. It is rather a hard thing that country gentlemen cannot rear a few birds in their woods, and find the same protection for such

property as for all other. The punishment for killing game ought to be assimilated to that for burglary."

"I maintain," rejoined the other, "that it is increased temptation, which generates the increasing evil."

"Is that any excuse, sir?" retorted Mr. Scentwell. "Is not one species of property as sacred as another? I see no difference between killing the hare which feeds upon my corn, and the sheep that eats my grass."

"As far as the abstract fact goes, perhaps not," replied Captain Loveman; "but not as regards the intent, or injury to society, which ought to form the basis of penal legislation. You may incarcerate and transport as long as you please, but you never can induce the lower orders to regard poaching with the same moral dread as they would other aggressions upon property. Why, it is a known fact, that even men of education and character—officers in the army and others—who would shudder to commit the slightest illegal act, are heard to boast of their success in eluding the game laws. Like smuggling, it is often considered a very good joke, and is practised by persons of higher station."

"You, Captain Loveman, who are a Whig and something more perhaps, may consider the crime as venial," replied the reverend justice; "but in my humble estimation, it is the principal source of that demoralisation which is so rapidly spreading through the lower orders. It leads from one misdemeanour to another, until it terminates in bloody tragedies, such as that of last night. It lures the peasantry from their duty and allegiance to their superiors, and converts them from friends and defenders into enemies and aggressors. It causes them to disregard the rights of property. It gives them a taste for lawless pursuits. It leads them to the alehouse, where they spend their ill-gotten gains in discussing subversive principles, in reading seditious and inflammatory journals, and thence renders them recreants against church and king. I hold poaching and disaffection as twin brothers. Until the legislature augments the penalties, and places the destruction of game upon the same footing as sheep-stealing, there will be no safety for church or state."

"Apropos of assimilating penalties," interposed the doctor, who seemed to be a very jocose person, "I remember reading in a book

of travels, written by a foreigner who had visited England, that in several instances much discrepancy existed between the metropolitan and provincial scale of punishments. ‘ Thus,’ said he, ‘ sheep-stealing is punished in the country with death; but in London the offender escapes with a short imprisonment.’ This the author accounted for by a legal subterfuge—*videlicet*, that sheep are no longer sheep, but for the most part mutton, when they have been a few hours in London; *ergo*, mutton-stealing not being sheep-stealing, the letter of the law is evaded at the Old Bailey. But, for my part, I conclude the error arose from the traveller frequently hearing people in town say, ‘ Pray, my dear sir, come and take your mutton with me to-morrow.’ ”

In the meantime the clerk made out the warrant, which the doctor signed, as well as Captain Loveman, who merely observed, that he thought the case a hard one. Then turning to me, he said, “ Boy ! if you are an impostor, you now see that such imposition will avail you nothing. It were better therefore to confess at once. At the same time I am far from desiring you to say a word that might criminate yourself.”

To all this I made no reply. The different formalities being terminated, one of the Wokingham constables was directed to convey me to Reading jail. There I made up my mind to confess my story to Captain Loveman, whose kind manner inspired me with confidence. I would have done so then, but my courage failed before Mr. Scentwell, from whom I could expect no mercy. Thus, like a feather borne by the winds, I allowed myself to be tossed here and there by my sad destiny.

It was late when I re-seated myself in the taxed cart, and the shades of evening had already closed in when we reached Wokingham, where the constable stopped to transact some business of his own, at the public-house of which he was proprietor. Having put his horse in the stable, he thought the best mode to secure me was by installing me in the stocks, which were close to his own house. He therefore thrust my ancles through the bar, bolted it, and left me to my meditations, and the gaze of the few passengers who were still on foot. An hour passed, and there appeared no symptoms of his coming forth. One by one, the idlers who paused to stare at me, disappeared. A veil of pitchy

darkness spread itself over all surrounding objects; and except the noise which arose from the roisters in the adjacent tap-room, with here and there the barking of some dog, the puling screams of some peevish infant, or the closing of some door, all was silent and solitary around. As I sat watching the rays of light that glimmered from the constable's abode, and anxiously awaiting to be released from my irksome position, two men issued from the public-house, and approached my place of durance. It was so dark that I could not distinguish their features; but one of them, who leaned against the stock's post much closer than was any ways pleasant, exclaimed, "Well, Bob! I don't know what I shall do. I sha'n't be able to get another like him for any sum. Why, bless you, my wife loved him like a child. He was as sensible as any grown-up Christian. The bills are up all over Windsor. He was engaged to perform the day after to-morrow before the Eton scholars—concarn him, he might just as well have given one a day's notice; but to bolt off, slap like a gun, that was too bad!"

"Ah! we be all poor weak creturs," said the other man, in a maudling, drunken tone;

"Here to-day, and gone to-morrow, as the Uxbridge butcher said, when we snatched his rib. God Almighty makes monkeys as well as men, Master Rupert, and so they dies of apoplexy and what not, like that poor stiff un, in the cart."

"God Almighty may make a sight of men uncommon like monkeys," retorted the other, "but he never made a monkey so like a man afore as my poor Jock. Why he could play the fiddle, and do all but sing to it. If he had only lived till Christmas, I'd have brought him out at Common Garden with Ashley's horses. It's only those kind of dumb actors that the lords and gentlefolks cares about now-a-days. I can't, for the life of me, think what killed him. He ate and drank——"

"Drank—that's it, Master Rupert," rejoined the other man, "'pend on't 'twas drink what killed him. Neither man nor monkey should never exceed a pint or so. In our profession, we requires a little drop to warm our poor hearts, now and then. But liquor causes the downfall of more honest men than any other wice;" and so saying, he nearly suited the action to the word, by tumbling over my legs.

"Come, Robins," said the other, "it is time to be off, and faith I do not half like travelling in such company at night."

A strange idea now came into my head, such a one as nothing but my desperate situation could have suggested. So I took courage, and called out, "Sir! what have you done with the monkey's skin?"

"Who the devil are you?" said the owner of the defunct animal; "and where are you?"

"Here," answered I, "here, in the stocks."

"Oh! oh! my babe in the wood, as I said to the poor gentleman, when I lifted him out of his coffin—what brought you into limbo?" exclaimed his companion.

"And what the deuce do you want with poor Jock's skin?" demanded the other.

"Why," replied I, "if you'll help me out of this place, and carry me off, I can play the monkey as well as the baboon you lost;" upon this they fell to laughing, and swore I was drunk.

"It's no laughing matter," said I, "the constable is going to carry me to Reading jail for poaching. So if you'll take me with you, I can pay for my keep by fiddling, and you won't miss the monkey, if the skin will fit."

"Well! you be a chiripy blade, at any rate," exclaimed the first man, "and as it's only for sacking a hare they have shopped you, hang me if I have not a mind to give you a lift." Upon this he said to his companion, "Go and fetch one of your tools, Robins; they have started stiffer bolts than this." The latter obeyed, and shortly returned, with some instruments, with which he succeeded in opening the padlock, and the other having placed me on my feet and measured my height, said, "You'll fit, I think, with a little patching. So take to your legs, and bolt along until you come to the cross-road to Binfield, and there stop and wait for us. When you hear a cart coming whistle, but don't stir until I answer." I did not require twice telling, but bounded off like a deer: after running for some distance, I reached the appointed spot, and concealed myself in the hedge. At the end of an hour, a vehicle approached rapidly. I gave the signal, it was replied to, and I was taken up by the showman, who desired me to lie down at the bottom of his cart, and cover myself with a horse-rug.

My deliverer then told me that, he had plied the publican constable so merrily, with his own

spirits, that he had little chance of moving until daylight, before which time we should reach Slough, where he had left his caravan. In the mean time, I lay tolerably snug amongst the straw, and prepared to fall asleep with my head resting upon a large full sack, which, in despite of a somewhat unsavoury odour, I employed for a pillow. I was aroused from my doze, however, by hearing one of the men say, "I'll be jolly well scragged, Mr. Rupert, if I'd do such another job for fifty pounds. Why, when I lifted him up, and was going to pull off his shroud, he opened his eyes, groaned as loud as a jackass brays, and shivered with his teeth and body, as if he'd had an ice jacket on."

"Was'nt he dead then?" demanded the other.

"Not he," retorted his comrade; "I have snatched many a body what has been buried alive, and has come to itself after."

"How do you know that, Robins?" demanded his companion.

"Know it!" replied the other, "why 'cause I found their hands, knees, and face all bruised and bloody. But then they'd given it up after a few kicks, and died like men; but I never met

with one afore that stood out twenty-four hours of such kind of fun."

"Why, then, what did you do?" asked the other, "you must have felt plaguy queer with such a customer."

"Why, I did feel a crumb uncomfortable at first, and had half a mind to let him make his way home to his wife—just to spite her like,—but I couldn't afford to lose my ten guineas, so I poked my lantern into his eye with one hand, to dazzle him, tomahawked him over the head with the other—down he dropped, and there he was again, as clean a stiff un as ever went to a theatre."

"I suppose that's what you meant by dying of 'what not,'" replied Rupert. The wheel now fell into a deep rut, and jolted me violently against something; which upon raising my hand I found was the face and arms of a corpse, that had burst the ligatures of the sack upon which I reclined. It was evidently the miserable man alluded to in the recent dialogue. The sensation of horror and disgust that chilled my very heart's core, is indescribable. To remain where I was revolted me, yet I dreaded to betray my feelings, lest the body-snatcher should

deal with me as he had with the unfortunate gentleman whose murdered remains lay by my side. At length I could no more, and begged to sit up. Thank Heaven, when we came nearly opposite St. Leonard's, we met another cart, containing two men, who, it appears, were of the same horrible profession as Rupert's companion: upon this we stopped, and a hamper was handed down by them. In this Robins packed his unholy booty, with fern and leaves: then mounting by the side of the two strangers, he bade Rupert good luck with his new monkey, and drove off in the direction of Egham.

We continued our course through Windsor, and Eton, to Slough, where the showman presented me to his collection of wild beasts and then to his wife, to whom he narrated the manner in which we had become acquainted, and my future destination. Whilst my master and mistress regaled themselves with a hearty breakfast, so redolent with onions that it almost brought real tears into the eyes of a young crocodile, their attendant produced the defunct baboon's skin, which had been carefully cured and stuffed with straw. By dint of adding a few rabbit skins, and strips of badgers' hide, it

was so fashioned that it fitted me like a glove, as they all said, and thereupon I was directed to exhibit my qualifications to wear it. This I did so much to their satisfaction, that I was rewarded with the remnants of the breakfast; and the animal, whose spoils I wore, was declared not fit to crack a nut with me. Indeed I could scarce help laughing at my transmigration, when I looked first at myself in Mr. Rupert's looking-glass, and then at a large female specimen of my adopted species, which was confined in an adjacent den. This brute, however, seemed no way disposed to like the joke: every time I approached her cage she grinned, jabbered, shook the bars, and showed as much indignation as would a fashionable lady, had she detected her waiting-woman attired in one of her velvet dresses. My mistress accounted for this display of choler, by saying, that she had been married according to the rites of the menagerie, to my predecessor, that it was quite a love match, and that she was supposed to be in the interesting situation "that ladies are who love their lords." Mrs. Rupert, who was a thrifty woman, also added, that like most love marriages, the happy couple

had no other fortune than their faces, but that, very unlike most worldly attachments, the widow's passion had survived the grave, and was evidently more than skin deep.

CHAPTER IV.

I exhibit a new kind of chronometer, and am invited to a court party—I become the champion of a beautiful maiden, but I sow for others to reap—I excite an unfortunate passion in one of my natural species—My virtue is piteously recompensed—I fall grievously sick, and my body is disposed of to the highest bidder.

As the performance at Eton was not to take place until the following day, I had leisure to improve my education by studying the habits and manœuvres of Jocko's relict. My master and mistress had time also to prepare my toilet: this consisted of a linen ruff for my neck, and a pair of red trousers, much stained with wine, and adorned with tarnished lace, purchased from the valet of an hussar officer; an opera hat,

with a long feather, and a cast-off footman's coat, which, from the quantity of tinsel on the seams, had served, most probably, at many a Lord Mayor's inauguration: to this was added a militia captain's bloodless sword, a frill and ruffles of paper, and my head being powdered with flour, it was difficult to ascertain whether I belonged to the genus *Simia Satyrus*, or to the race which, less provident than the monkey tribe, too often commits itself by giving vent to its tongue.

In the course of the following day we moved within the precincts of the college, where Mr. Rupert was allowed to draw up his caravans, and admit the boys and functionaries to visit the animals at feeding time: an especial favour, obtained through the intercession of two or three of the master's wives, who were great blue stockings, and admirers of natural history; and wonderfully elated did the whole classic body appear, when, amidst the roars of lions, the screams of mackaws, the shrill squeals of monkeys, and the howling of wolves and jackalls, the half-starved animals cast themselves with ravenous fury upon their scanty provision of raw flesh. As I could not go through any part of

this ceremony without betraying myself, my master, who was a celebrated conjuror, stoutly refused to show me before night, when I was to make my appearance in the dancing-school, where he was permitted to give an exhibition of his art. Soon after dusk, my cage and Mr. Rupert's instruments of legerdemain were moved to the appointed place, and I was placed behind a curtain to await the end of the first act, as announced by the bills.

When this was terminated, my master took up his trumpet, and, after two or three flourishes much out of tune, a common practice with the best performers upon this instrument, he bowed, and his assistant, attired as a beef-eater, came forward and exclaimed, "Ladies and gentlemen, you shall now see what you shall see, but what no one ever see'd afore in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America, let alone all other countries. It isn't the wonderful eagle of the Halps, which, as you larns in your books, sarved Jupiter as link-boy, don't care a brass farthing for a comet, and sees the man in the moon with his naked eye—a sight better than Dr. Herschel with his big glasses;—it isn't the terrible hyæna, what descends from his mountain solitudes into

the peaceful walleys, eats red cabbage, brown sugar, pigs, little school-boys, and what not,—and then laughs all the while;—it isn't the zebra, what runs up to its neck in sand as fast as a Newmarket race-horse, is striped all over like a drummer's jacket, and won't stand riding or driving, not no how;—it isn't the frightful porcupine, which sticks up his back like a lady's pincushion, and shoots his quills at birds, batts, and running hanimals; and though they ben't bigger nor fleas, kills 'em as dead as herrings;—it isn't the wonderful flamingo, which builds his nest a top of mole-hills, lays red eggs, and sits astride to hatch 'em, for all the world like a life guardsman on his charger;—it isn't the hostrich, what wears the Prince of Wales' feathers in his tail, and swallows crow-bars, baskets of knives, tenpenny nails, and such like, as Christians does penny-tarts;—it is'nt the royal leopard, what the nabobs in Hindjer hunts helephints, crocodiles, and run-away sodgers with, and is spotted all over like a Thames trout;—it isn't the great boa-constructor, or big snake of Japan, which coils hisself up like a ship's cable, and bolts oxes, young whales, and horse-dragoons, sword, spurs, blunderbush, and all,

as you does lolly-pops;—it arn't that wonderful cretur, which the French warment, Mr. Buff'un, calls the ourang-outang; but which we calls the Sham-pansy, or vild man of the voods, what makes sweethearts of the little nigger girls, 'tices 'em away from the Sunday-schools, and then roasts 'em for supper;—no, gentlemen and ladies, it arn't any one of these here, nor them ere; but it's the curiousest hanimal in the known world—the wonderful Tam Jam, or red-nosed baboon of Calephornia, upon the coast of Coromondel, where the monkeys be as big as men, and the men a sight bigger nor May-poles. Tam Jam's the first what ever come alive to this country. Two on 'em was sent over in three ships from the Grand Turk, as a present to his Majesty,—God bless him and all the royal family; but they was cast away on a desert island, and never caught alive by the towns-folk. My master bought this here for a gold-lace cocked-hat and a looking-glass from the King of Africa, what said as how as Tam Jam had been edicated by the missionaries, which took him for a nigger boy, and would not have parted with him for no price, only he wanted to turn Roman Catholic. He can dress hair, play cards,

fiddle, dance, read, write, and do all but speak; he's had the honour to perform before the Royal Society, the Lord Mayor, the Duchess of York, —God bless her, she's so kind to dumb hanimals, and before that fill-office, Sir Joseph Banks, what give him a Latin name as long as a sermon, and said neither he nor Captain Cook never see'd his like dead or alive. Now, gentlemen and ladies, please to remember the poor keeper—it's all he gets."

This string of nonsense, uttered with great gravity, drew forth more applause from the boys than ever did the finest one-armed* oration from Demosthenes or Cicero, spouted by the sixth form upon election Monday; and, what was of more value to the keeper, lined the bottom of his hat with sixpences. My master now gave another flourish with his trumpet, and then, leading me forth, he exclaimed, "Now, Tam Jam, salute the company."

Upon this I waddled forward, took off my hat, bowed, and then, turning head over heels three

* "*One-armed,*" in allusion, most probably, to the Eton custom of restricting orators to the use of one arm, except when addressing the Di immortales.—R. of E.

or four times, seated myself upon the floor, and set to work playing with bits of paper, and allaying my bodily irritation after the fashion of my species.

"Will any lady or gentleman lend me a watch, and Tam Jam shall tell the time of day as he was taught by the missionaries," said Mr. Rupert. A watch was handed to him after some hesitation, and then to me, and, to the great dismay of its proprietor, I popped it into my mouth, and made a motion as if it were swallowed; upon which my master appeared very angry, and bade me disgorge it. After some persuasion, I put my paw to my throat, and, to the delight of the spectators, out ran two white mice, which were concealed in my pouch: I then extracted several yards of party-coloured ribbons, and, lastly, an egg. Rupert took this from me, rattled it, declared the watch was inside, and then, placing it upon a plate, broke the shell, and, amidst great applause, drew it forth unsullied. "Now, Tam Jam," said he, "tell us exactly what's a clock." Upon this, I rolled my eyes, hopped about, turned round, placed my head between my legs, and, saving your blushes, reader, marked the

exact time by tapping the hour with my right, and the minutes with my left hand, upon that part of the body with which the masters were but too familiar in the execution of their disciplinary functions.

This vulgar joke produced great mirth among the boys: the tutors winked at one another, and the dames, who could see better without glasses than with, all tittered, and raised theirs at me. After various tricks, which I performed with great success, a fiddle was placed in my paws, and Rupert asked what tune I should play. God save the King being selected, I went through the air, according to the opinion of the audience, nearly as well as the leader of the queen's band,—a great compliment, considering that gentleman's practice. At length my performances terminated with that graceful national dance, the sailor's hornpipe; and I was re-conducted behind the curtain amidst thunders of applause, but miserably ashamed of the ignoble character I was compelled to sustain, and no less astounded that rational beings could evince so much pleasure at this caricature of their own species.

Some hypercritical physiologists may cavil at

this portion of my unhappy history, and question the possibility of my being able to imitate the gestures and gambols of a monkey so as to deceive the practised eyes of Eton tutors and dames; but have not Mazurier and Parsloe immortalised themselves by representing those animals with as great fidelity and, *pro pudor*, with still greater applause, than Garrick or Kemble ever portrayed Macbeth, Richard, or any other brute with human lineaments?—besides, have we not daily instances of the tendency of man to degenerate into his primitive state, not of naked innocence, but of unveiled monstrosity. We need not step far back for examples,—we need not open the pages of the historian or tragedian, of the French Revolution, the Causes Celèbres, or Newgate Calendar,—we need not descend to the hideous den of Burke, or to that of the cold-blooded, philosophic Larcenaire — no, let us lift our eyes higher: — let us turn to Warsaw,—there we shall find a monarch, the head of the northern civilisation, the father of his people, the ostentatious invoker of God's mercy in church, sepulchre, and battle field, the most liberal man of his empire, as we are told,—yes, there we

shall find him threatening ruin and devastation to a whole city, pledging his imperial word to spare neither age nor sex, innocence nor guilt, —to bury old men, pregnant women, infants at the breast, wealth, indigence, health and decrepitude, in one relentless heap of destruction, should his writhing people raise a single finger against the supremacy of his iron rule.

But Squire Oxover's symbolic turnip is rising before me like the ghost in Hamlet: let us mash the odious vegetable, and return to the wretched Tam Jam.

The report of my sagacity and intelligence soon spread far and wide, and produced so great a sensation, that Mr. Rupert received orders from the queen's vice-chamberlain to attend at Frogmore, where her majesty was about to give a fête champêtre to the children of the nobility. Mr. Rupert practised me with a number of new tricks for the occasion. I suggested that I had better omit the latter portion of the watch scene, and beat the hour with a pair of cymbals; but, whether or not it was at the particular desire of the queen's pages, or some of the ladies of honour, I know not, my master received a hint that I must go through

all my Eton performances without the slightest curtailment. At an early hour our caravans were removed to the royal gardens, which were to be enlivened in the evening with all the dawning rank and beauty of the kingdom, and where, perhaps, through the kindness of my noble patron, I might have figured as a humble guest, instead of a degraded performer, had it not been for the accursed machinations of Nibshort, or my own fatal destiny.

I cannot give an account of this splendid entertainment. All I know was, that an apartment was arranged in the palace for Rupert's and my performances, and, in the meantime, my cage, with that of many other animals, were conveyed to a sort of sylvan grotto, where they were decorated with foliage, fragments of rocks and spars, and so distributed as to give them the appearance of natural dens. This arrangement produced so much satisfaction, that, had Mr. Rupert lived a few years later, he would probably have been rewarded with knighthood, or, at least, with the Guelphic order. Independent of these dens, some caves were prepared, in which a tame bear, the she-baboon, and a beautiful panther, were chained to strong stakes,

so that the brutes appeared, as it were, at liberty.

At length, the sound of music announced the arrival of the royal family, who visited the different parts of the gardens, and, after inspecting our cages, returned to the palace. They were soon succeeded by various groups of all ages and sexes, some resplendent with diamonds and costly vestments, and others, still more brilliant, in the clear, unrivalled beauty, which is the type of our island daughters: all paused to gaze at me, some started back with horror and disgust, others pitied the poor brute, wondered if apes had souls, and declared, at all events, I had human expression in my eyes. Oh! if they could have read my miserable heart, or seen my blushes of anguish and shame, how they would have lamented my horrid condition!

I was sitting with my head reposing upon my hand in an attitude of melancholy thoughtfulness, too human for my assumed species, when two persons approached, and looked into my cage. The one was a man in the prime of life, of noble carriage and intellectual features: his coat was decorated with the star, and his

knee girt with the insignia of the most illustrious of all European orders, which set off to greater advantage the symmetry of his manly person; the other was a lady in the full bloom of youthful beauty. Her head, resplendent with diamonds, her countenance, radiating with intelligence, and her eyes beaming with mingled archness and tenderness, as she ever and anon raised them from me to the graceful face of her companion: they were probably some newly-married couple.

"To judge by the attitude and apparent pensiveness of that animal," said the lady, after a pause, "one might be inclined to believe in that most absurd of all doctrines, the metempsychosis: he looks as if he were meditating upon the time when he was either a courtier or an opera dancer."

"And why should he not?" replied the gentleman; "Empedocles remembered having been a boy, a virgin, a plant, a bird, and a fish; and Pythagoras declared that he perfectly recollected being wounded by Menelaus' javelin at the siege of Troy, when in the body of Euphorbius."

"I wonder whether that stiff-looking mar-

tinet in a general's uniform, who stood at the queen's elbow, fancies that he was Marlborough, or the man in the wig near him, that he was Lycurgus: they have sufficient vanity and little enough merit for both."

"The vainest specimen of this kind of retrospective faculty," answered the other, "is that of the Emperor Julien, who said he could only call to mind his having been Alexander the Great. He held it degrading to descend lower, or to acknowledge in his own person the Platonic hierarchy of transmigration. But, jesting aside, my love, the doctrine of Pythagoras was much less ridiculous than you imagine. In my humble opinion, it was not only the purest, most moral, and most useful of all dogmas established by the ancient philosophers, but intimately connected with the most essential basis of the Christian religion."

"You do not seriously think there was either utility or morality in persuading a coward that he should become a woman, a faithless lover a magpie, or a court lady a sun-flower?" demanded the lady, smiling.

"I beg your pardon. The dogma of Pythagoras, and the scale of transmigration establish-

ed by Plato, were to all intents and purposes the practical dogma of immortality. The metempsychosis was a species of material purgatory, a gradation of purifications, through which it was necessary for the soul to pass before it was re-united to the divine essence; it materialised and rendered palpable the greatest of all divine conceptions: it was to the heathens in substance, that which our doctrine is to us in spirit; it explained to them in a tangible manner that which otherwise would have been above their intelligence, deprived as they were of books, pastors, education, and civilisation. By placing before their eyes the punishments awarded to the wicked, and the rewards promised to the just, it expounded to them simply and comprehensively the great law of eternity—the immaterialism of the soul,—that law for which Socrates died, and which, even amidst the obscurity by which he was surrounded, his enlightened mind acknowledged, preached, and vainly endeavoured to transmit to others."

"But surely," rejoined the lady, "you will admit that this kind of substantiation deprived immortality of half its awful grandeur, by revealing to the eye that which our faith wisely

withholds as a sublime, unfathomable mystery."

"I do not intend to draw a comparison, but to prove a connexion between our doctrine and that of the Pythagoreans. All I mean to say, is, that the almost universal diffusion of the latter at the period of our Saviour's birth, rendered the subsequent inculcation of the former more easy. In an age of such comparative darkness and ignorance, when the word of truth could only reach the senses through the ear, or by substantial imagery, the metempsychosis was excellent in a religious, political, and legislative sense, and such evidently was the object of its founders, as well as of Aristotle, Seneca, Porphyrus, and others, who advocated the same principles, but in a manner similar to that in which the dissenters of our day support the doctrines of the mother faith; that is, the object was the same—they only differed in the mode of attainment."

"I cannot presume to argue upon these metaphysical subtilties," observed the lady; "but I must persist in thinking these doctrines extremely immoral and paradoxical. Setting aside the gross imposture and absurdity of the old bearded gentlemen attempting to persuade

their disciples that they remembered having passed through the bodies of men and animals, what could be more inconsistent with morality than for a man to believe that he might ride his papa to market under the shape of a donkey, eat his brother in the form of a haunch of venison, or marry his mamma or grandmamma if she became a young woman?"

"And yet," returned the other, "these doctrines were established, not only all over Egypt, India, and a portion of Europe, but we find a remarkable proof of their existence amongst the Jews in the historian Josephus, and even in the Testament itself."

"In the Testament!" exclaimed the lady, with an air of surprise.

"Yes," answered he. "The Sadducees totally disbelieved the immortality of the soul, whilst the Pharisees credited it under the form of transmigration, and this belief appears to have been participated in by the apostles themselves."

"Impossible, my dear Henry!"

"Something very like it, however," replied he. "You recollect the words of our Saviour upon his coming to Cesarea Philippi, as recorded by St. Matthew?"

"Certainly," rejoined the lady: "'Whom, demanded our Saviour, do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said, Some say thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. But Simon Peter answered, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'"

"Well, from this it appears evident to me," answered her companion, "that, with the exception of Peter, the other apostles believed that our Saviour had pre-existed under a different form. But I can give you another instance from St. John. We there find the disciples asking their master, 'Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was *born* blind?' Now, if they imagined this man could be born blind as a punishment for his sins, they must undoubtedly have supposed that he also must have lived, and committed sin under some other shape ere he was re-born, which proves their faith in the doctrine of transmigration, even after their conversion."

The lady was about to reply, when they were joined by a party of their friends, and the whole of them moved on towards the palace.

The shades of evening were now drawing around. Myriads of coloured lamps began to spangle through the foliage, and to vie in lustre with the red tints of the setting sun. The greater part of the guests, fearful of the evening damps, had withdrawn to the apartments to await my performance. Here and there a group or two still strolled by our grotto, and I thought my heart would have sunken within me, when amongst the last of them, I discovered my old enemy, Lord Felix Springwood, who approached my cage, leading a young lady of rare beauty. Affected as I was at the sight of the youth who was an accessary to my misfortune, and who would perhaps have given half he possessed to have known that the boy he loathed was before him, under the loathsome figure of a baboon, I was not less struck at the appearance of his beautiful companion. I had seen the princesses and their attendants as they passed. I had gazed upon the fairest, the noblest daughters of England, and thought each succeeding group more fair and lovely than its predecessor, but none were to be compared to her. She appeared about sixteen years of age; at that moment of female existence when the budding

glories of woman are commencing to expand in all the verdant freshness of youthful luxuriance; when the swelling juices of the human frame are rising in overflowing richness, like the vine-sap drawn forth by the bright and balmy airs of May. I could not pretend to be a judge of beauty by comparison; but my mind had fashioned to itself its own model. It might be a dream, a vision, or the natural instinct of the soul, but still I felt and knew what beauty ought to be, and she appeared to have attained its utmost limits; for she was more beautiful than any print or picture I had seen, more lovely than my own visions, and more graceful than any description I had read in Virgil, Ovid, or in the few novels which had fallen in my way at Thistle-house. However inconsistent it may appear, my human heart throbbed hard beneath my monkey's skin, as I gazed upon her clustering raven locks, her dark eyes radiating with goodness and intelligence, her small white teeth, and her foot, that scarcely left its print upon the sand. Yes, my heart vibrated within me, as I looked upon her graceful fawn-like figure, and heard her speak in a voice as mellow, clear and silvery as the notes of some richly-toned instrument.

During some minutes, the couple stood conversing opposite to me, and my old antagonist seemed, as it were, to have an instinctive feeling of hatred towards me, for he poked at my eyes with a long flower-stick, and then opening his snuff-box, cast the powder in them. Enhardened by my patience, he then put his hand through the bars, and tried to prick me with his shirt-pin. But though I could not resent the insult as a man, I did it as a monkey. Springing forward I seized his arm, twisted it round, and pulling his nose against the bars, pinched it, until he roared for help. His fair companion seemed to be more amused than vexed at this, saying, "Lord Felix, I fear it is your own fault: if you had not plagued the poor brute, he would not have hurt you. Fortunately you cannot fight a duel, so you are both safe. But pray do not irritate any of the other animals, or you may not escape so cheaply."

But his lordship was not contented with the lesson I had given him. Turning round to the panther's cave, he commenced worrying the animal by throwing stones, and lastly, when the brute walked to the extent of its chain, bristling its back, moving the muscles of its mouth,

growling, and showing other symptoms of anger, he struck it violently with his stick, and then taking his companion's hand, ran off. The moment he turned his back, the animal retreated a few paces, couched down, and giving a sudden spring forward, burst its chain, rolled over, and fell against my cage. Springwood and the maiden saw this, and fled. I saw it also, and my blood chilled when I perceived the panther rise, shake itself, lash its tail, and creep quickly after them. The keeper had been called away, and there was no one near to arrest its progress. Utterly reckless whether I betrayed myself, so that I could save Springwood's companion, I opened the door of my cage, seized a heavy mallet, which had been used by the workmen, and followed. 'Twas well I did so. The couple in their fright had hastened down a rocky passage, from which there was no issue. The enraged animal was within five yards of the lady; I saw it creep stealthily along, crouch, and with one bound dart upon its victim. In an instant more I was at its side, levelled a blow at its head, felled it to the ground, and then seizing the remnant of its chain, prepared for its attack. I had not to wait long: quick as

thought, it raised itself upon its hind legs, and giving a roar of fury, darted upon my uplifted arm, upon which it affixed its fangs. At this moment, up came Rupert, his assistant, and others, who with some difficulty rescued me from further injury, and whilst the latter secured the animal, the former hurried me off to his caravan, more troubled lest my real nature should be discovered, than distressed at the accident. Indeed, the only consolations I received, as he bound up my lacerated arm, were a few hearty curses at my having risked "blowing his concarn," by interfering in what did not concern me. This, however, was not the case, he said, as fortunately the servants and gentlefolk were too much occupied in attending to the lady to think of me. The young lord, also, was so frightened, he could not tell whether it was a monkey or a man that saved them.

Although my wound prevented my performance that evening, Rupert had no reason to repent my conduct. He was rewarded for my courage by a princely donation from the august hostess, and one equally noble from the father of the young lady, who was slightly wounded on the shoulder, and was, as he said, a daughter of

the Earl of Eaglehurst. Who she was, mattered little to me; but although I could receive no reward for saving her from a miserable death, I thanked God for it. Alas! I now compared my present degraded lot with the proud and happy day when Lord Toryville had given the medals to me at Thistle-house, and thought to myself, if I could but make my real condition known to the father of the lady, that he would extend his protection to me. But this was impossible. Rupert and his man watched me with a jealous eye, and, as if suspicious of my trying to escape, kept me constantly confined. I was reduced, therefore, to content myself with the praises bestowed upon the monkey, and to hear several pious visitors ascribe this extraordinary act of devotion to the education I had received from my supposed instructors, the African missionaries.

I also heard say, that at the next meeting of the society, this strange incident was ordered to be printed in one of their tracts, as a proof of the wonderful success of the brothers, and that it gained them many proselytes and much money. People arguing, that if they had succeeded in such a wonderful manner in huma-

nizing a brute, there could be no doubt of their easily converting all the savages. Poor men! their zeal did but redouble. Consequently half-a-dozen extra members were impaled in the celestial empire; four or five were roasted and eaten by the Sandwich islanders, and the thigh-bones of as many more were converted into flutes, by the Ashantees, without adding a single convert to their flocks.

At length we quitted Windsor, and travelled from town to town, reaping rich harvests and spreading far and wide the fame of Tam Jam, or the royal baptist baboon, as I was called. In the meantime I passed a miserable life. My master, who seemed as little disposed to part with me, as had been the gipsey-leader, never permitted me to move out until after sun-set, or unaccompanied by the keeper. I was scarcely allowed clothes sufficient to cover my person, and Rupert flatly told me, that as he had taken me from the stocks and put me in a cage, exchange was no robbery, and that if I attempted to abscond he would deliver me over again to the Berkshire magistrates.

Thus the sword of Damocles, or what was still more terrible, a constable's staff, was sus-

pended over my head, and I had nothing left but to submit, and to pray night and morning for deliverance from my horrid bondage. My situation was rendered still more wretched by an unforeseen misfortune. Although the blue-faced baboon evinced unceasing animosity towards me, and seemed inconsolable for the parent of her future progeny, Mrs. Rupert's lamentations for the deceased Jocko entirely merged in her rejoicings over Tam Jam. She had been extremely kind and indulgent to me from my first introduction, and when my features recovered their natural tint, when the saffron dye had worn away, and my bright curling locks had resumed their original length and lustre, her attentions increased, and she said she was sure that I was no gipsey, but some run-away, or stolen child, and that she was confident, from my manners and conversation, I was a gentleman born. In the innocence of my heart I attributed her endearments to the natural humanity of the female heart, and to her pity for my sad condition. But from one thing to another, she proceeded so far, that I could no longer mistake her meaning; and although I had never dreamed of love, or felt the slightest

emotion at the thought or sight of woman, save at the name of Delphine Toryville, or the young lady I had saved at Frogmore, I could not help discovering, that Mrs. Rupert's hymenial vows were not amongst the things of this world which most embarrassed her conscience.

She had been one of the most accomplished figurantes in Mr. Richardson's ambulatory *corps de ballet*, and could boast of having had many admirers. Her charms, as the keeper told me, had produced a world of misfortunes, and nearly caused as much mischief as those of Helen. One clown, who, in fact, suffocated himself by eating red-hot tow, was supposed to have committed suicide on her account. A rival figurante, who over indulged in spirits, and fell a victim to self-combustion, was declared to have poisoned herself out of jealousy. A rope-dancer and harlequin, from Sadler's Wells, had fought a duel with fists for her hand, and even young Mr. Richardson had made very honourable propositions. But she preferred Mr. Rupert, who won her heart by slight of hand, tempted her with a marmozet and a poplin gown, and transferred her to his zoological Eden. Indeed, whilst we were at Windsor, an officer of the

Oxford Blues, who visited the menagerie two or three times a day, and who, being the best judge of a splint or spavin in the regiment, was considered as great a natural philosopher as Cuvier, paid marked attentions to my mistress, and looked at her in a very tender manner. Little suspecting 'a snake in the grass,' in my skin, he one afternoon made a vigorous charge, and attempted a salute, swearing that he loved her better than port-wine, his first charger, or any of the fine ladies who came to hear the kettle-drums, and stare at the royal family upon the terrace. But Mrs. Rupert winked at me, and vowed she would not leave her monkeys —not to mention her husband—for any soldier-man living.

Following Eve's example with Adam, she not only tempted me with apples, but, thinking that the road to my heart lay through my stomach, she plied me with ginger-bread nuts, gave me the tit-bits at dinner, washed my scanty stock of linen, and mended my stockings and skin, in the hopes of making a hole in my morals. There is no accounting for the susceptibilities of the human heart. We know that Europa became enamoured of a bull, Leda

of a swan; and that other ladies have loved or pretended to love, the most consummate asses: there is nothing surprising, therefore, in Mrs. Rupert's tenderness for an animal which bore such strong affinity to her own human species. Be this as it may, I ate, drank, and played the fiddle, until the former process brought water into the mouth of the keeper, who was as great a glutton as Dandolo; and tears into the eyes of Mrs. Rupert, who was in truth more fond of music, than most subscribers to the ancient concerts; and had become so much in love with me, that I had a hard matter to prevent her carrying me off, not to Gretna-green, but to Greenwich-fair, where she said we might set up on our own account: but, although I opened my mouth to her dainties, I shut my eyes to her seductions, and remained as firm as the monkey-breeding rock of Gibraltar. Her ardour did but augment with my coyness, until at last she became so pressing that I was obliged one evening to feign sudden sickness, to escape from her arms: it was the paraphrase of Joseph's adventure with the fair Egyptian; I did not leave my garments in her hands, for, if I had, I must have shed my skin: but my resistance cost me

dear; her heart was henceforth closed against me, her honey was converted into gall: there was an end to tit-bits and tenderness, to darning stockings and dalliance. From a gentle lamb, or rather a comely ewe, she was metamorphosed into a panther, and from trying to effect an inroad upon my heart, she now only sought to make an impression upon my skin: in short, her ill-usage and animosity knew no bounds. She would have turned me naked into the street, or cast me into prison, had not her husband declared that he would not exchange me for Mr. Pidcock's large elephant, and a camel to boot. Alas! it was easier for the latter animal to pass through the eye of a needle, than I to escape from the dominion of my tyrants.

Thus matters went on, until we reached Buckingham: at length, fatigue, anguish of mind, blows, and starvation, reduced me to a mere skeleton, and I was attacked with a fever, which laid me upon my bed; or rather, upon the heap of straw which formed my couch. At first, Rupert treated me as he was wont to prescribe for the other sick animals, but my malady increasing, he was obliged to call in a village cow-leech, who told him he would give

me a ball or two, but that my case was hopeless.

This intelligence seemed to afflict him grievously, not only on account of the loss he would sustain by my death, but by the expense of my funeral: for my own part, I had no desire to live; I anticipated death as a release from suffering, rather than as a dreaded termination to my hopes. Although innocent, and unoffending against human and divine laws, my passage through life had been a constant succession of misery: I had never committed any voluntary sin, and yet, through the dispensation of almighty Providence, I had been subject to a series of afflictions, such as rarely befal even the most abject and degraded. In conformity, therefore, with the spirit of religious submission to God's will in which I had been brought up, I argued that my career in this world had been one of purposed trial, for which I was to be rewarded hereafter, and that it was a proof of divine mercy to call me hence: this persuasion cheered my heart, and filled my soul with resignation.

Wishing to communicate to Lord Toryville, and M. de Florennes, my adventures since

quitting Thistle-house, and to make a last solemn declaration of my innocence, I begged to be allowed pen and paper, but ere this was brought me, I was seized with delirium.

Of what passed in my bewildered mind, during this period of aberration, a vague impression alone remains. Strange visions and fearful scenes assailed me. The events of my life were all whirled and jumbled together in my burning brain, and like the shingles on the sea-strand, rolled to and fro by the ebbing and flowing waves. There was the wild tempest's roar, and lashings of the furious ocean, mingled with the ravenous howls of savage beasts: lightnings flashed, and thunders pealed: vessels manned by apish mariners with ghastly faces, such as Nibshort's, glared and jabbered at me: then all was dark, and silent, as eternal starless night: anon, a thousand sparkling lamps, such as I had seen at Frogmore, rose before me: music and thrilling voices filled the air, my parched lips were cooled by the delicious breeze, and fountains of rich nectar seemed gurgling through my feverish veins. My dear young friend; the grey-haired pilot; Steers; de Florennes; Delphine Toryville, and the blooming daughter of Lord

Eaglehurst, attired in robes of golden splendour, appeared before me, smiling and joyous. Methought I stood with them before the illuminated throne of mercy; amidst the choir of seraphims, and the angel of grace stretched forth his hand, and raised his voice, loud, swelling, and harmonious as the organ's tone, and said, "Thou'rt saved!" and I fell upon my knees, and blessed my God: then my head swam, and I whirled, plunging, like the shooting star, myriads of miles through the glorious firmament, and lay in the cold forest: presently I heard the owlet's screech, and the dying keeper's groans; and when I sought to fly as the gipsey had done, the panther sprang upon me, and affixing its claws in my flesh, bounded into Rupert's cart, and there I rolled, linked with the ghastly corpse, which took the form of Nibshort, and tried to strangle me.

It was during a short respite from one of these hideous hallucinations, that I heard the following dialogue, through the thin partition, which separated me from my master's chamber. "Well, Robins," said he, "there's no dealing with you, if that's the case; you shall have the body for what I say, and not a penny less; I could get

more for it from the gentlemen themselves: why, bless you, man, his teeth are worth all the money!"

"I know what he's worth," replied the other, "better than you, master Rupert; I've snatched some dozen in my time, and can ticket the value of a subject, from a giant down to a baby; his nibblers isn't bad, and might fetch a smiler or two, especially as the dentist's cad said he knew a court lady what wanted just such a set for the king's birth-day: but, bless you, bodies arn't worth half what they was a few years since, only for manure, and the Dutch and Jarmins has all that trade now: but if you choose to take the money, here it is, and you'll save the expense of a funeral."

"Funeral!" retorted Rupert, "thank you, Master Robins, one would think you was rector of the parish, and wanted the fees: you don't suppose I'm such a snob as to bother myself with giving a monkey christian burial. However, if you'll make it guineas instead of pounds, and throw in a half-gallon of blue—he's yours."

"Done!" exclaimed a third voice, "and here it is."

"Done!" re-echoed Rupert, "and there he is."

The clinking of money upon the table now announced that my miserable body was disposed of. The agitation produced by this horrid bargain, again threw me into delirium, and, thank God, I became for a while insensible to all that passed.

CHAPTER V.

I re-migrate to my own form—and am conveyed to the hospital, where I witness the death of a sinner—I engage with the manager of a strolling company, and think to eclipse Betterton, Garrick, and Kemble.

When I recovered my reason, the last words I had heard, still rang in my ears: I doubted whether I was dead or alive; whether I was upon my filthy pallet in the caravan, or deposited in the cellar of some anatomist. I stretched out my enfeebled hands, and found that I was upon a bed, and this different from the straw on which I had hitherto reposed: I then touched my teeth with my parched tongue, they were all safe—what had befallen me, I knew not. But as I

gasped for breath, I inhaled a purer air, and felt as if the anguish of my brain and racking joints was diminished.

Presently, however, low groans and moanings fell upon my ear. Turning my head, I saw on either side, a line of ghastly, corpse-like faces, with here and there a passing shadow on the wall. I was too weak to raise myself, and almost fancied that I was lying in some dreary vault, surrounded by the dead or their departing spirits. But, as my scattered senses rallied, and my sight resumed more clearness, the dim light, flickering from the ceiling, showed that I was in a sick chamber, with many suffering creatures like myself.

Close by my side, lay one o'er whom death hovered with outstretched talons, as eagles swoop above their prey. Piteously he moaned and quivered; piteously he murmured forth his dying prayer, broken by starts of pain, and pangs of mental suffering. To hear his words, he must have lived a life of sin, and feared a death of retribution. To watch his writhing throes, and shuddering agony, his body must have been a furnace, his mind a hell; remorse and terror, with all their hideous train, beset

his heart, and racked his frame, as the fierce waves assail the stranded vessel. It was awful to hear this man, torn by the lashings of his conscience, beseeching the Almighty Father, whom, as he said, he had long renounced, to pity and relieve him. Anon, he called upon God to save a dying sinner. Anon, he called upon his blessed Saviour to help, redeem him. Then he thought of his aged parents, his wife and child, and cursed himself, who had brought shame and sorrow on their heads. Then he burst into tears and sobbed—oh! with an agony, as if each gurgling sound had rent the filaments of his seared heart: as if each scalding drop had been a brand from sin's eternal fire!

I saw and heard him with a shudder. Man's tears are terrible to look upon! Lash him to the burning pile, the wheel, the rack,—tear off his flesh piecemeal, or crush him limb by limb, he'll bear all this, and more, without a sigh—nay, sing or pray the while—defying agony, as adamant defies the chisel. But when he weeps —when his tortured soul seeks ease in tears—when nature harrows forth this silent witness of his pangs, 'tis sure the moral torment far sur-

passes all that racks and fire can work upon his worthless flesh. A woman's tears are like spring-showers, caused by a fleeting cloud, dried by a sudden sunbeam. The flood-gates of their gentle hearts stand ready open to relieve their sorrows. They sob, they weep, and ere their lids are dry, radiate again, even as the meadow flower, bent by the early dew, uprears its glistening head before the sun has sipped away the moisture. Tears are a woman's strength—her victory. They are man's defect—proofs of his soul's bondage. The agonizing sobs that agitate his breast, are like the throes of Ætna—his tears the burning lava. Her's are as the mountain rill, swollen to a minute's torrent, which glides away in bubbling wrath, and then, all calm and smiling dallies with the waving sedge, or amorous breeze, that courts its kisses.

God knows if what I heard arose from terror for the future, or remorse for the past; but, although ignorant of the cause, I thought a death so terrible, so full of agony, might expiate a thousand sins. There I lay watching him, until, overcome with weariness, I once more slumbered. When I awoke, the sun was up, and was casting its rays upon the features of the dying man,

and upon a group of figures who stood around his bed. One was a clergyman, who, with the Gospel in his hand, poured words of comfort in his ear. Another was an aged man with silvery locks, who held his clammy hands between his own, and gazed upon him in speechless anguish —this was his father. A third, a boy of ten years old, reclined his head upon the sufferer's breast, and wept—that was his child. Two more stood by and listened. Alternately the sufferer pressed his father's hand to his cold lips, and then his mouth upon the child's bare head. Raising himself a little, he said with a feeble voice, "Father, I am unworthy of your blessing or forgiveness, but I thank God that my agony is softened by your presence; it is more than I expected or deserved." The old man sighed and struck his forehead with his hand.

"Be comforted," said the clergyman; "if you have faith in God, he may still show you further mercy. If your contrition be sincere he may stretch forth his hand to save you."

The dying man started, and still clinging to a hope of life, looked anxiously. The clergyman saw this, and shaking his head, continued in a

solemn voice, "Not here—but hereafter: have faith."

"O sir," replied he, "I have faith, but dare not hope. I have been a miserable offender, and merited still greater punishments than those the laws inflicted on me, or would have dealt to me, had they not been deprived of their prey. All crimes, save that of blood, are upon my head. And yet I am not free from that. It was I that broke my mother's heart, and drove my wretched wife to suicide—it was I that abandoned my child, and brought my good old father to ruin and a jail. I have robbed, uttered base coin, herded with the lowest of the human race, and broken every law, human and divine. I have no hope——" his voice now failed him, and the parting spirit seemed to linger on his lips.

One of the other persons, who was a magistrate, or officer of justice, now interposed, saying, "Have you no accomplices in the last crime, for which you were apprehended? are the forged notes your own manufacture?"

"No!" answered he, endeavouring to collect his strength. "No! they were not. I owe it to justice, to myself, to declare that I received

them from the man who lured me to my ruin—who first taught me to rob my employer—who seduced me from crime to crime, until I became a burglar, and an utterer of base money, and then, I believe, denounced me to save himself."

"Who is this man?" demanded the gentleman. "Where can we meet with him?"

"When I returned from transportation," replied the other, whose voice had now become nearly inarticulate, "I was utterly destitute—I had no friends—no means of procuring a mouthful of bread but by returning to my old haunts and companions; so I sought out the head of our old gang of smashers, and heard he was in the country. I wrote to him, and he bade me meet him at the Green Dragon, at Salisbury, near which place he is employed as usher at a school."

The officer took notes, and I listened with breathless anxiety; for a secret boding told me that the name of the man I most loathed on earth was about to be pronounced.

"What school? what is the name he goes by?" demanded the magistrate putting his ear to the wretch's mouth, who murmured forth the word "Martin," and fell speechless upon his

pillow. In an instant more the last fearful rattle gurgled in his throat, his eyes became distended, his limbs quivered, and he was a corpse.

The clergyman, who held his hand, raised it for a few seconds, dropped it, and falling upon his knees, uttered the following short but touching prayer.

"Lord," said he, joining the uplifted points of his fingers across his breast, in an attitude of supplication, "if he has committed manifold transgressions, for which thou mayest eternally condemn him, thou hast not lost that whereby thou mayest redeem him. Let thy justice slumber for this sinner, but let thy benignity awaken for thy creature. Forget to proceed against a guilty soul, but remember thy mercy towards a miserable wretch. Overlook the weakness of the provoker, and behold the misery of the invoker, for thou, Lord, art the Saviour."

When the unhappy relatives were torn from the body, the wardmen came, lifted it up, and conveyed it to the dead-room. I heard no more about him, except that he had been apprehended at Banbury for passing forged notes, and was on the way to Newgate, when the coach

was overturned near Buckingham, and his body, miserably mutilated, transferred to the infirmary, in which I had been placed a few hours after. Although he had mentioned the name of Martin, there was a secret something in my breast which told me that Nibshort and Martin were the same. Indeed, I now remembered having picked up a scrap of a letter at Thistle-house which began, "Dear Martin." I feared to speak, or I should have communicated my suspicion to the clergyman who came and sat by me, and who, after a short spiritual conversation, bade me be comforted, and assured me I should be well attended to.

In about an hour after this, two strangers, one a man, and the other a woman, approached my bed, and as I lay with my eyes half-closed, conversed about me.

"Well, Gates," said the female, "I trust the lad may recover, though it will cost us a good sum to bring him round. Why, those Ruperts must be greater monsters than the savage brutes in their own caravan. But I fear that in doing an act of charity, you have consulted your heart more than your pocket."

"Well, it is but a speculation after all," re-

plied the man, "and as all the world's a lottery as well as a stage, who knows but I may draw a prize? Confound the rogues, I could not stand by and see them sell the poor fellow's body before he had "shuffled off his mortal coil," and not risk two or three guineas to save him. Besides, the old gipsey-woman, who put me up to the trick of the monkey, told me she was acquainted with his story; that he was a gentleman born, and an extraordinary performer on the violin: but that she had sworn to keep his secret. So, at all events, we may obtain a handsome remuneration from his family, if he can tell us who he is, and declines engaging with us."

"Poor young gentleman!" ejaculated the good woman, "I will do the best for him. But here is the doctor."

This short colloquy poured balm into my heart, and I inwardly thanked God for his mercy in throwing me into such benevolent hands. The physician now drew near, and after feeling my pulse, and asking me a few questions, said, "The crisis is over, and I think, Mr. Gates, you may rely upon his speedy recovery unless there be a relapse. He will, however,

require much care and kind treatment. His illness appears to have arisen from starvation and ill-usage, rather than from constitutional or bodily derangement."

I had henceforth nothing to complain of, and was soon enabled to remove from the hospital to the lodging of my new purchaser, who, I found, was a man of very superior education, and manager of a troop of provincial comedians, about to assemble at Aylesbury. In a short time, I was enabled to move, and being furnished with wholesome food, decent apparel, books, and musical instruments, speedily recovered my strength and good looks. In the meantime Mr. Gates asked me many questions, and endeavoured to learn my story, saying, that although he had gone to some expense in taking care of me, he should not hesitate in aiding me to return to my family; but that if I persisted in concealing my situation from them, and felt disposed to join his company, he would pay me according to my merits. In the latter case, I must sign an agreement to remain with him, and that no doubt I should eventually be promoted to the London boards, like many others who had commenced their career in a similar manner.

I maturely weighed all these matters in my mind, and hesitated for three or four days whether I should throw myself upon the commiseration of my anonymous guardian, and brave the chances of a trial for the crime imputed to me, or accept the manager's proposition. At length, being well pleased with Gates treatment, and dreading Nibshort's revengeful spirit, I abandoned all idea of discovering myself, and signed an engagement, by which I bound myself to the manager for five years. At the same time I wrote to M. de Florennes, telling him of my resolution, but withheld both the name of my new master, and my place of concealment.

CHAPTER VI.

In which the reader will be regaled with a learned note upon "parsley beds," and a no less remarkable disquisition upon tragedy and Shakspeare—Some account of our dresses and properties—I make my first appearance in Richard the Third—What is sport to you, as the frogs said, is death to us—A tragedy instead of a farce by way of an after-piece.

INDEPENDENT of the ordinary fascinations of an actor's life, my ambition was excited by Gates' conversation and praises of the profession. One evening, he invited several performers to supper, and when we had demolished two roasted geese, with an orchard of apple-sauce, three boiled fowls, with butter and parsley enough to have formed beds for all the little children born in

Aylesbury, the punch-bowl was introduced, and each of the guests joined in extolling the merits of the buskin.*

"It is the path to wealth and distinction," said one of our female stars—"who, pray, are more esteemed in London than actresses of beauty and good reputation? Have not many of them been elevated from the ephemeral splendor of green-room coronets, to the permanent glories

* Apropos of parsley beds. It is the usual custom, when children propound to their nurses the very delicate question, "Where did I come from?" for the gossips to reply, "Why, from the parsley bed, my dear." Now, I cannot for the life of me discover any authority in sacred or profane history, or in any philosophical, botanical, medical, or mythological work, for this nursery tradition. I have searched Genesis, and other parts of the Testament; I have looked through the notes on Milton's Paradise Lost; I have carefully examined the *Creazione Primitiva* of Diodonato, and other eminent works treating of such matters—I have dipped into Pliny, Galenus, Dioscorides, Ruellius, the erudite Castilian Menardes, and the no less learned Arabian, Sidi-Ben-Halisch, as well as the Almanach Du Bon Jardinier; Loudon's Encyclopedia, and Theophrastus *de Plantarum*, where this herb, which is supposed to be a native of Macedonia, will be found under the head of *Apium Domesticum*, or *Petrosilinon*. But, although it is stated to possess many

of the peerage? and, after a life of quiet virtue, and domestic excellence, have they not died mothers of renowned statesmen and soldiers?"

"And the men," rejoined our first tragedian, "look to the memory of Garrick, or to the reputation of Kemble and others in our day, whose society is courted by all that is most distinguished in the land, and whose names will descend to posterity, linked with those of the immortal poets whose heroes they personified."

medicinal and culinary virtues, besides having the same effect upon the head as Maccassar oil, I cannot find a single word to entitle it to the privilege of being the universal cradle of the human race, or in the slightest way instrumental to their appearance upon the stage of life. Indeed, no less an authority than the illustrious philosopher Andrew Caesalpinus, who culled all the best Greek, Latin, Spanish, Jewish, and Arabian botanical authorities, in order to compile his curious work *De Plantis*, not only makes no allusion to this privilege, but cites Crisipus and Dionysius to prove that parsley has the effect *sterilescere* mares *et fæminas*. If, therefore, the opinions of these authors merit confidence, the traditional nursery saying must be considered as a satirical allusion to the non-productive qualities of this otherwise innocent herb. Had Malthus known this, he would not, perhaps, have failed to recommend it as a specific against excess of population.

"And most justly," exclaimed another actor, who has since risen to great eminence in London; "without our exertions, of what avail would be the noblest works of the tragedian? Some wit of olden time said, that tailors and painters often contributed more to the success of a tragedy than performers; but, in my opinion, authors are oftentimes more indebted to actors than to their own merits."

"Doubtless," added Mr. Gates; "for how many pieces would die still-born, were it not for the arduous labours of our profession! How many would be cast away, were it not for a good cast! We act as midwives, and often bring the embryos safely into the world, when no Cæsarean operation, in the shape of a printing press, could effect the same object."

"Printing!" exclaimed the other. "Let a tragedy be ever so well written, who cares to read it until we have taken it in hand, and established its reputation? Why, sir, we have it in our power to procure the damnation of the best poetry ever written, and *vice versa* to insure the success of the most pitiful balderdash that ever escaped from Grub-street. People talk of reading tragedies! Pah! tragedies were never

intended to be read as a whole. A written play is like a dial without a sun, a body without a soul; to live, a tragedy or comedy must pass through our mouths to the printer's hands, and not from his devils to the gods."

"And yet sir," said I, "I have received intense pleasure from perusing some tragedies, and have been as much excited by the brilliant images and noble touches of nature, as if the personages and scenes had been acted before me. It is true, I should like to have seen the battles and apparitions, instead of reading 'they fight,' 'she dies,' 'trumpets sound,' 'ghost rises,' 'alarum rings,' and so forth: I have also missed the effect of the thunder, lightning, and stabbing."

"There we differ most essentially," replied Mr. Gates. "It is in this that we English sin morally. I agree with Addison, that a great poet will give the reader a more lively idea of a battle or tempest by description, than if he actually saw foot guards, attired as Romans, engaged in mortal combat upon the stage, or firemen, dressed as mariners, 'buffeting with lusty sinews' a sea of pasteboard billows."

"Besides, this personification of battle is an

encroachment upon our rights, and deprives us of an additional opportunity for showing our powers of diction," exclaimed the other. "For my part, I think the less one has of cut, thrust, powder, and thunder, the better. Though your country audiences are tremendous gluttons, and require a great deal of bloodshed, I believe they would like a tragedy the better if all the dialogue was left out, as I have heard of an opera being got up, 'the singing omitted by particular desire.'"

"As far as this degenerate age goes," exclaimed the manager, "one may say now-a-days that we have the *rus in urbe*: your fine London people are as much delighted with poison, gibbets, murders, and gunpowder, as your veriest rustics. Indeed, so great is the public tendency this way, that authors and managers are compelled to shape their productions accordingly. Why, by the rood! I've seen an excellent tragedy rejected at Covent Garden for want of a thunder-storm; another went back that the author might kill a couple of his *dram. pers.*, in order to introduce their ghosts in the fourth act; and a third requested to bring in a charge of cavalry to prove the virtue of his heroine."

"I remember reading of a French wit saying to a composer, whose opera was damned, 'Shorten your figurantes' petticoats, my dear sir, and lengthen your ballet next time, and you will carry the town with you.' Now, the advice I would give to any young poet," observed our tragic colleague, "would be, shorten your dialogues, and lengthen your death agonies. Egad, gentlemen, I have a mind to collect a company of dumb performers, and let them enact a whole tragedy with their hands instead of their tongues, and allow no one to speak but the thunder and big drummer."

"Joking apart, sir," replied Mr. Gates, "I think we might very materially improve our stage by transferring all the murders, battles, and deaths, from the front to the back of the scenes. With a little latitude of imagination, the audience might conceive all these things, even if they were not described. Therein the French have a great advantage over us, or had at least before the revolution, which seems to have given them a thirst for bloody representations, and to have corrupted that pure taste and delicacy for which they were formerly pre-eminent: I say nothing of their vaudevilles, which,

in most instances, are sullied by gross indecencies, and the most profligate moral."

"But, gentlemen," exclaimed Mr. Gates, "it is time to settle our week's cast: these Aylesbury bucks are great warriors; they've one of the most death's-head-and-glory-looking yeomanry crops in the country. We must try and suit their taste with a warlike tragedy, and then wind up, *secundum artem*, with a broad farce. We'll open, if you please, with Richard the Third, and Raising the Wind, and Mr. Jessop (for that was the name I assumed) will play a violin-concerto between the pieces. There are murders, ghosts, battles, and coffins enough in the first to gorge the most insatiable appetite: his Grace of Buckingham, moreover, holds a prominent part in the piece, and his descendant has promised to patronise us: this will fill our house, and help us to go merrily through the farce."

"What version are we to give," demanded our first tragic actor: "the old thing, eh?"

"Yes," replied the manager; "we must follow the track, deep and miry as it is, though I am free to confess I cannot comprehend the public taste in preferring Cibber's adaptation of

this noble tragedy, with all his unnecessary additions, faulty omissions, and unseemly changes, to the original, nearly as it is given in the printed editions of Shakspeare."

"Nor I either," answered the other; "it is neither one thing nor the other—neither fish nor flesh, neither Shakspeare or Cibber. Why tack on all the last scene of Henry VI. and his murder in the Tower by way of an opening?—as if there were not bloodshed enough in Richard—as if the English public were not sufficiently acquainted with history to comprehend the frightful character and murderous ambition of Gloucester. In the original, all this is effected gradually, and with becoming dignity. The monster marches from sin to sin, from crime to crime, without remorse, without appearing before the public at first starting as a common self-acting assassin, and thus in a manner destroying the projected development of later scenes. The original commences also with an eloquent and soothing description of the termination of the civil wars, and the centralisation of power in the House of York: besides, it embodies the fine character of Margaret, the only one in the whole tragedy whose conduct is marked by

firmness and resistance to the usurper;—whereas Cibber introduces one at once to the horrors of the dagger, fills one with disgust instead of sublime awe for Richard, and packs off Margaret to France, as if her character was not essential to the whole, as a brilliant contrast to the weakness and want of dignity of the other women."

"I agree with you," rejoined the manager, "and even lament the omission of the chorus of spirits, which would have a much more impressive effect than introducing the raw heads and bloody bones one by one: but we must do at Rome as the Romans do."

After a few other observations, all the party assented to the proposal, except the female star, who had a temper as fiery as her complexion, and a reputation as much faded as her person, but who contrived, however, with the aid of paint, a wig, and plentiful padding, to produce a tolerable candle-light person.

"This is all very fine," exclaimed she, biting her lip, and tapping the ground with a foot much neglected by the pedicurist; "who, pray, is to take Lady Anne?"

"Why, you, of course, Mrs. Ringdove," replied Gates.

"Me!" retorted the lady; "no; I'll be shot if I throw myself away in such an insignificant part: only one scene, and a few words after, and then to die off the stage, when my forte is dying."

"Her hair, before it was shaved off," said the manager, aside.

"I hear you, sir," answered she, "I hear you; but I don't care a straw for your base insinuations; I know my own powers: my favourite parts are Juliet, which suits my face, and Lady Macbeth, which suits my figure."

"And gentle Kate, which suits your temper," added the persevering Mr. Gates.

"A plague on you," retorted the star; "you are enough to ruffle that of an angel. You know I drew immense houses at Manchester, and electrified the public in the dying and sleeping scenes."

"To die—to sleep," ejaculated the manager, "there's the rub: perhaps you murdered sleep."

"As you do every part you attempt, sir, save that of Manager Strut. Talk of rubs, sir, the Manchester people have some taste: they made me stand rubbing my hands more than twenty minutes in Lady Macbeth, and encored me three times when I died in Juliet."

"The first," answered Gates, "proved that they had studied the text, and would not be cheated of their time: it was 'an accustomed action with Fife's wife to continue in this a quarter of an hour:' besides, they are fond of bowls in those parts, and expect rubbers; the second was quite in keeping in a place so renowned for its dyers. But, if I recollect right, the Lancashire ladies were more pleased by the witches' scene than with your rubbing: the innovation of making the brindled cat mew, was very happy, and loudly applauded."

"It was only encored twice though," rejoined Mrs. Ringdove.

"But the guinea-pig, in the whining hedgehog's skin, squeaking round the cauldron—you knocked under to that."

"I won't knock under to you, sir," retorted the lady, "or to any other man living."

"Yes," replied he, "you will to Richard, as sure as God's in Gloucester."

"The devil take me ——"

"As it did him—perhaps so; but, as you are 'well skilled in curses,' suppose you try Queen Margaret, we'll introduce it expressly: it will suit your figure of speech at any rate."

"You are a cowardly fellow to insult an unprotected woman," blubbered out Mrs. Ringdove, who began to have recourse to tears; "O if I had a husband here!"

"Whose?" demanded he, drily.

"Why, not such a Jerry Sneak as your wife's," retorted she.

"Marry come up, Mrs. Ringdove," exclaimed Mrs. Gates: "I beg you will not allow your tongue to run on in this fashion: talk of husbands, indeed! first catch your hare, ma'am."

"Do you mean to say I'm not married, ma'am? Oh! if poor Ringdove were here; but I'll sue you for defamation, I will, you hen-pecking vixen."

"Well," replied Gates, "it may be so; but if I am hen-pecked, it is more in the breach than the observance. But enough of this broil."

"Suppose we make one out of these chicken bones," observed another performer: "Mrs. Ringdove will furnish pepper."

"'Tis base to fall thus upon a defenceless woman," exclaimed Mrs. Ringdove, dropping hysterically into a chair.

I immediately applied the vinegar cruet to her nose; but the former speaker said, "Oh,

do not be alarmed, it is only a falling star." And, as she continued to pant and weep, Gates added, " Come, come, my dear Mrs. Ringdove, dry up your tears, doff your weeds, and wed Richard: you need not stand in fear of bigamy, you know."

This sarcasm produced still more violent bursts of passion, and she cried, " No ! no ! you inhuman monster, I will sooner die first."

" You must pay the expenses of your funeral in that case," responded the manager, " in the shape of a fine. You know our laws; but 'tis now dead midnight, and time to court the golden dew of sleep. To-morrow, our first rehearsal at nine: on Thursday we open. If Mrs. Ringdove shuffles off her choler, she will doubtless deal with Gloucester, or cut the beggarly deniers; Mr. Jessop, you will make your first appearance in the Prince of Wales; and, as you have versatile talents, and little to do, you will undertake the page, two or three messengers, half-a-dozen ghosts, and now and then an attendant, and be ready for your violin-concerto after the first piece. Now, gentlemen, the stirrup-cup." Then, turning to the offended lady, who sat pouting in a corner, he held out

his hand, and said, "Here's to our better fellowship, fair lady: you shall have Macbeth on Wednesday, and Juliet on Friday; so now, good night:

'Sleep rock thy brain,
And never come mischance 'twixt us again.'"

The rehearsal took place next morning, and then, notwithstanding her resolution, the offended star appeared with her part, and I with my half-dozen, which I had sat up all night to copy, and succeeded in repeating without any eminent blunder; but in a manner no way corresponding with Gates' anticipation. Rebuking me for sawing the air with my hands as if they had been the wings of a mill, and for making the Prince of Wales drawl out his words as if he had been droning out his own death-dirge, he frankly told me that, unless I succeeded better with my violin than my parts, he feared I should never make a figure, or rise beyond thirds. This damped my courage, and caused me serious alarm for my future prospects.

The day of performance at length arrived, and, at an early hour, we commenced our preparations in the property-room, where the motley treasures of Gates' wardrobe were soon jumbled together, as the different performers

sought for the parts of dress, which, in most cases, were nearly as characteristic as those of their speech.

Red and green damask bed-curtains, fashioned into heralds' tabards, were mingled with knights' mantles made from worn-out court slips; barons' robes of red serge, trimmed with cat-skin ermine, peered from beneath courtiers' doublets of lustreless silk, with sables from an Oxfordshire rabbit-warren; trains of soiled cotton-velvet were thrown upon faded satin corsets, knotted with worsted ribbon bows and tin-foil gems; gauze ruffs were substituted for lace, and pourpoints of spangled taffeta for those of gold-cloth; toques and barrets, surmounted with old hearse-plumes, were tossed in the same heap with red stockings and blue plush hose, slashed with crimson puffs: paint-pots, wigs, false curls and beards, burnt cork for mustachios, paper rosettes, copper-foil coronets, and coloured-glass jewels, were strewn about with leathern rapiers, pasteboard bucklers, and tin helmets: there was a sufficient supply of javelin-like, wooden curtain-rods to arm a plump of lancers, so as to enable the partisans of the rival roses to make pot-pourri of each other upon Bos-

worth field; the courtiers were very appropriately represented by some Chelsea pensioners, the waiter and boots from the George, and a cad or two from the coach-office, whose proprietors, hearing that Richard would call for a horse, liberally offered to lend Mr. Gates a blind grey mare, that was not afraid of the lamps, and had trod many a stage; the church pew-opener, with three or four respectable old women from the alms-house, were engaged as ladies of the bed-chamber; the contending armies were completed from a recruiting party of the Royal Marines; and half-a-dozen Buckinghamshire yeomen, famous at singlestick, were enlisted for a bout upon the field of battle: in short, Mr. Gates neglected neither trouble nor expense to ensure success.

Much to the joy of the manager, the house was filled, a complete bumper, long ere we were fully prepared. For some time the audience appeared very patient, the pit and galleries amusing themselves with drinking ginger-beer and porter, or with admiring the nobility and gentry in the boxes, who amused themselves in their turn by admiring each other, and expressing, at least by their looks, their reprobation of

those vociferations and outcries, which are so peculiarly characteristic of an English theatre. At last, their patience was exhausted, and they loudly demanded the play. In vain "the sawyers" endeavoured to calm their impatience, and attune their souls to melancholy, by scraping the dead march in Saul, and half-a-dozen dirge-like country dances: it was throwing pearls to swine. Before the lights, all was outcry and clamour—behind the scenes, all was swearing and confusion.

"Curse you, where's my mitre?" ejaculated the Archbishop of Canterbury.—"That infernal carpenter has not brought my crosier," exclaimed his grace of York.—"I can't borrow a coffin from the workhouse not nohow," said a breathless messenger to Gates.—"Well, then, we must bury Lancaster in a pig-trough," answered Gloucester.—"I've no truncheon," roared out Richmond.—"Here's a round ruler," replied Catesby.—"The deuce take your bungling fingers," exclaimed Elizabeth, "you've corked me two left eyebrows."—"What shall I do? I can't find my false stomach," said the Lord Mayor.—"That's unfortunate, for you've a real appetite," retorted Hastings.—"You've

rubbed my cheeks with the ghosts' indigo instead of rouge, you fool," said Lady Anne.—"I've no dagger, sir," hallooed out one of the murderers.—"Take a bricklayer's trowel," retorted Gates.—"Stop! stop! I've forgotten my crooked leg," roared Gloucester.—"It's in the wing," replied Stanley.—"Are you ready?"—"Yes—no!"—"We can't wait."—"Prompter! I can't find the book."—"Ring."—"The bell's got no clapper."—"Never mind, the audience have."—"Clear the stage—out of the way—pull;" and so up went the drop, and discovered Gloucester, who soon made worms'-meat of Henry, and calmed the 'winter of discontent that lowered upon our house.'

As the play proceeded, I carefully watched the scenes, and thought they were enacted remarkably well, and so did pit, upper boxes, and galleries; but this must have been an error in judgment; for the fashionable people in the first tier laughed, giggled, and talked so loudly, that they nearly drowned the hoarse voice of Gloucester, who, from a new conception of the part, or, as some said, in imitation of Betterton and Garrick, spoke as if he had a violent sore throat, and, moreover, gave such strange starts,

hitches, and intonations, that he looked as though he had St. Vitus's dance, and a violent colic to boot. I supposed these defects were quite in character with the protector's other deformities, and that Richard had been a martyr to some chronic disease of the trachea as well as the spine, and that his sudden fits and starts proceeded from an evil conscience and his fear of the devil. Although I never could discover any authority for these conjectures in Ben Jonson, Rowe, or any of Shakspeare's numerous commentators, I concluded the actor must be right; for, at a later period, I saw Kean adopt a similar tone and style, and as this invariably called forth immense applause, there can be no doubt that he knew the true history of Gloucester's constitution, and that the monster was afflicted with a permanent catarrh, not to mention a sloppy cold and red nose, the most unpleasant of all worldly attendants, except an evil conscience.

Notwithstanding Gloucester's fine conception of his part, the ladies and gentlemen continued to exhibit their good breeding by quizzing the performers, and disturbing the audience, at which the rest of the company seemed as much

vexed as the actors; but, being mostly tenants, tradespeople, or dependants of the great folk, no one durst call for silence. I must, however, do the latter the justice to say, that they were not slack in their plaudits; for, although they discreetly allowed all those parts which merited approbation to pass unnoticed, they vehemently applauded every mistake or accident, and nearly brought down the roof of the house with their bravos, when Hastings' wig fell off instead of his head, and when the murderers, having stabbed Clarence, dragged his body to the back of the stage, and pitched it head foremost into a water-butt.

Being ignorant of the ways of the world, I thought all this applause extremely kind, and was vastly gratified by the manner in which they encouraged me, "a young gentleman, his first appearance upon any stage." Dazzled by the lights, and alarmed by the multitude of faces around me, I tried to keep my eyes fixed upon my uncle Gloucester, and did not want "more to welcome me," though I could scarcely distinguish my august connexions from the lord mayor and aldermen. At last I was so bewildered when I saw the noble owner of

Stowe fixing me with his glass, that I turned my back plump upon Richard and my cousin of Buckingham, and addressed my surmises about the Tower and Julius Cæsar to the living peer. I hoped all the plaudits I heard were intended for me; but when Gloucester whispered in my ear, "You d——d fool, turn round," I perceived that my brother of York had come in for a share of the good things. This witty prince was personified by Mr. Gates's daughter, who could not be induced to come upon the stage until they enticed her with a large piece of bread and treacle, which she carried in her hand, munching and licking her fingers. The country audience were vastly pleased at this, and thought it very natural that a child, who had ridden from Stony Stratford to London, should be glad to snatch a mouthful to eat; but the great folk, who are accustomed to dine when the bell rings, and not when they are hungry, literally screamed with laughter at this solecism in royal dignity, and called out, "Encore! encore!" to which my loving brother very ingenuously dropped a curtsey, and said, "I'll go and fetch another piece."

If I had not been penetrated with the majestic beauties of the tragedy, and convinced that two or three of our performers were men of no ordinary talents, I should have thought that the order of representation had been reversed, and that we were playing a farce; for if the audience shed tears, they were the effect of mirth and their own ill-timed jests, and not from being moved by the imposing grandeur of the poetry. This might have been very amusing to them, but it was extremely galling to us; and, I am sure, if the fashionable people, amongst whom were many kind and generous hearts, had known the pain they were inflicting, they would have restrained their merriment, and withheld their sarcastic applauses, which fell upon us with a bitterness no one can conceive save those who have been victims to such unfeeling irony. The effect of this upon actors, who are struggling, not only to gain an honest existence, but to obtain a reputation that may elevate them to higher walks, is often most disastrous. I have since met men, whose latent powers only required encouragement and developement to render them pre-eminent in their profession, but whose exertions have been chilled, whose

hearts have been blighted, and who, possessing fine feelings as well as fine talents, have retired, disgusted and disheartened with the reckless irony of heartless witlings, whose knowledge of human nature, or the drama, scarcely entitled them to utter an opinion even upon the performance of a funambulist.

In despite of all this, our company laboured on, and the play was not disturbed by any further incident, until the scene where Buckingham's capture is announced. But at the moment Gloucester retired, croaking forth "Off with his head!" a strapping fellow in a green plush jacket, who turned out to be a Stowe park-keeper and a corporal of yeomanry, sprang upon the stage, and, seizing the usurper by the collar, pushed him back, exclaiming, "D—n thee, thou hump-backed villain! if thou touchest a hair of his head, I'll break thine: there arn't a better master nor landlord in all Bucks."

"Bravo! bravo!" resounded from every part of the house, and several of the marquis's tenants, who had been exceedingly moved by the piece, also rose up, and said, "And we'll stand by you, Mr. Buckhorn: my lord's a friend to the farmers, and if the fellow with the crooked leg

and back says another word against him, we'll pitch into him, though he may have Dorset and Yorkshire to back him." It was not until the peer himself, half convulsed with laughter, rose and assured his retainer that he was in no danger, that the sturdy keeper relaxed his grasp, and permitted Gloucester to quit the stage.

But the shouts of merriment, which this interruption produced, were soon converted into cries of terror and confusion. A fearful catastrophe was about to explode. A strong smell of burning had been perceived during some minutes; but, as every one was occupied with the foregoing incident, it passed unnoticed. In two or three seconds, however, smoke was seen to issue from near the floor of the temporary property-room, which was partitioned off from a spacious hay-loft, and ere any of us could arrive at the door, a column of fire burst forth, and the whole of that side of the building was enveloped in a sheet of flame. The dreadful cry of "fire! fire!" now resounded through the house; the audience rose simultaneously, and, regardless of every other feeling but self-preservation, rushed towards a narrow door, the sole

egress. All distinction, all respect for age or sex were forgotten,—peers, players, farmers, and squires, milliners, milkmaids, and countesses—all hurried forward in terrified confusion, screaming, fainting, tearing, and treading upon each other with reckless indifference. Some fell, and were trampled upon; others were crushed, and borne along in a dying state to the very door; others, more prudent, waited, and watched the progress of the flames, which had now communicated to the orchestra, and commenced their ravages upon the body of the house. A few gallant yeomen jumped upon the stage, and came to our assistance; but all attempts to arrest the progress of the fierce element were vain. Several loads of hay and straw had ignited, and sent forth such intense heat and smoke that the utmost we could do was to try and save our lives by springing from a window upon the tiles of an adjacent building.

Unfortunately, poor Mr. Gates had removed the night's receipts to a strong-box in the property room, and determined to make an effort to save it. Poor man! he not only failed, but perished in the attempt. How this happened we knew not. Some saw him approach the

room, and dash through the smoke; but, when we afterwards assembled, he was missing, and not even a vestige of his body or property was discovered. Thus his widow, not having wherewithal even to pay her husband's debts at Aylesbury, and none of his property being insured, the company was broken up, and I was once more cast upon the world without a friend.

CHAPTER VII.

I am advised to abandon the buskin, and to seek my fortunes in London—I set out for the metropolis, and fall in with a recruiting party of foot guards—The sergeant takes me under his protection, and extols the advantages of a soldier's life—One of the recruits differs with him, and cautions me against being entrapped.

As I stood watching the crumbling ruins of the theatre, bemoaning my forlorn condition, and not knowing where to turn my head for a mouthful of bread, the actor who had played Richard, came up, and, laying his hand upon my shoulder, exclaimed, "Why, how now, Charmian? Good sir, take heart; you look as though you were ready to make your quietus with a bare bodkin. Come, be of good cheer; the lieges of Aylesbury have made a subscrip-

tion, and your cousin of Buckingham has sent us a noble largess. You, of course, come in for your share: the callants have generously repaid us for their sneers; so I forgive them. Alas, poor Gates! Though I were to shed as many tears as the firemen have thrown buckets of water upon the ruins, they could not blot him from my memory. But he is beyond the stings of fortune, and so God rest his soul; and Heaven forfend that he should have tumbled out of the frying-pan into the fire, which will be our fate unless we look sharp, and shift for ourselves. Your countenance likes me," continued he; "but I am a poor devil, and can therefore do little for you, save in the way of advice, and of that commodity I can be as bountiful as a rich uncle when a dutiful nephew asks him to pay his gambling debts."

"I should be most grateful," replied I, "if you will even assist me with that: I really know not what will become of me."

"With all my heart," answered he; "and now then, forgive me, in the first place, if I tell you, that, although you are a handsome young fellow, and with good parts, I do not think you are cut out for the stage. Stick, therefore, to

your cremona, and if you like to try your fortune in London, I will give you a letter to my brother, who is one of the first violins at the opera, and will doubtless procure you an engagement: so waste no time, but be off on your journey as fast as you can." I thanked him, accepted his offer, followed him to his lodgings, received two pounds as my share of the subscription, and, having bidden adieu to Mrs. Gates, who generously made me a present of the few articles of clothing purchased by her husband, I put them into a bundle, and proceeded on foot towards London.

Having walked seven or eight miles, I reached a small road-side alehouse, before which stood several fine-looking men, with a profusion of party-coloured ribbons and cockades in their hats, whom I at first mistook for morris-dancers; but upon closer examination, I found they were recruits for the guards, under the care of a sergeant in a smart gold-laced uniform.

Wishing to procure some refreshment, I entered the house, where I met the sergeant, who politely touched his cap, flourished his cane, and said, "A fine morning, sir! going our way? marching up the little village, as we call it?

If no liberty, would be proud to drink your health."

Thinking he meant me to treat him, I rather hesitated, upon which he smiled and said, " Lock up, sir, lock up, I'll stand the shot. Thanks to his Majesty, God bless him! we foot-guards can always ask a gentleman to drink his health. Landlord, a quart of ale. Take off the chill, d'ye hear? and feather it with a spiced toast. We guards don't drink your raw stuff. That's against the duke's orders. He takes as much care of us, as if we were her royal highness's lap-dogs. Did you ever see the duke, sir? The Duke of York I mean. As fine a man as ever bit cartridge. The soldier's friend, as we called him in Flanders; and would have done in Egypt, if they would have let him command us. He's as straight as a halberd. Rare hand at a field-day. One, two, three, and crack he has us out of square into line, as if he pulled us with a string. At the last review in Hyde Park, up he rides to me, on the right flank of the grenadiers, as I was whispering the word of command to the captain. Bless you, our captains don't bother themselves with such trifles. All gentlemen, lords, and baronets. They just

stand there for form's sake, and we do all the business. But here's the ale. Let's drink the duke's health." Then blowing off the froth from the tankard, and presenting it to me, he continued, " ' Sergeant,' says the duke, ' how are you, my old boy?' ' Like a new flint,' says I, ' please your royal highness.' ' This reminds me of our advancing to the charge at Courtnay. —Sharp work, wasn't it?' says he. ' It was,' says I, ' please your royal highness.'—' Damn it, they march like rocks,' says he; ' the line's as straight as the side of Pall-mall.'—' I'll be reduced to rank and file, if it isn't,' says I. —' Right—left—beautiful! I could skewer the whole front rank with my sword if it were long enough,' says he.—' By God, you might, please your royal highness,' says I. ' Eyes left,' says he. ' Eyes left,' went I, and there they were, one body, one foot, like a single man. The mufties cheered, the ladies waved their handkerchiefs, and a good many drowned themselves for love. Egad," added he, draining the tankard, " there were five of our light company, fine, handsome fellows, just about your height; one of 'em as like you as two bayonets: they made their fortunes."

The recruits all listened to this part of the story with great attention, and one of them asked, if the light company gentlemen had drawn prizes in the lottery.

"Lotteries be hung," replied the sergeant. "No! the women couldn't stand it: grounded arms by whole platoons; wrote them love-letters; played old Harry, and mobbed the barrack-gate. So we turned out the guard to keep them off, and as sure as I was in Flanders and Egypt, the colonel was obliged to give his consent, and the bobs were married by royal licence, and who do you think to?" We all stared. "Why to five of the lord mayor's daughters, with a plum in each of their haver-sacks, and now they mount guard in their coaches."

In the meantime, I drank my share of ale, thanked him, and wishing to reach Messenden before dark, was preparing to depart, when he exclaimed, "Gentlemen foot-guards! By-the-bye, I hope you know the distinction betwixt the horse and foot in the household, as the poets say—we call t'other the cheese—all rind, sir! But it's getting late, so fall in, gentlemen, if you please. The corporal is gone to order our beds

and suppers at Messenden. Steady! those that can. Glad of your company, sir," continued he, turning to me, "if you'll do me the honour, we'll shorten the way with a song or a story: an agreeable companion on the road is as good as a coach, as the poet says."

Not being sorry to have both society and protection, and thinking, perhaps, the sergeant might assist me in finding my way when I arrived in London, I willingly consented. The words, "Forward, gentlemen," were given, and on we went.

Merrily the recruits sang and laughed. Joyously they talked of the anticipated pleasures of a soldier's life. All play—pay—fine clothes, rare eating and drinking, and no work, save that of serving the king and the lasses. Some were striplings with the light curly hair, blue eyes, fresh complexions, and independent gait, peculiar to the Anglo-Saxon blood; who had been lured away from their snug homes and peaceful occupations, by the seductive assurances of the wily recruiter!—ignorant, poor fellows! of the privations, galling restraints, and almost slavish bondage, that awaited them. Others were dark-eyed, bold-looking fellows, loose in their

language, looser in their appearance, and with all the reckless bearing well befitting the adventurous life they had embraced. Reduced to misery by idleness or profligacy, they had cast themselves as a last resource upon the pomps of war, and seemed ready to defy the lash or the bullet.

"A fine batch," said the sergeant to me; "front-rank dare-devils; made of the right kind of stuff. I warrant me, they won't care an old flint for the adjutant or the halberds. And they're right. A rare life we lead in London—drawing-rooms, king's guards, plays and operas. Were you ever in London, sir?"

"No, sir," replied I, "but I am going there. I have a letter for a gentleman, whom perhaps you know."

"To be sure I do—that is, if he is a gentleman. We foot-guards never keep low company. I know all the seven battalions as well as my knapsack. In which regiment is he 'listed?"

"He is not enlisted, that I know of," rejoined I.

"What, a volunteer! Then he arn't in the brigade, sir. But that don't matter, I'm not proud; we'll drink his health at supper. He

must be in the line, sir. Volunteers are as common as pipeclay there. None the worse for that, however. Leads to promotion, when there's any work. Bless you, I remember in Flanders and Egypt, whole squads of them going into action with brown bess on their shoulders, and coming out with spits by their side. But we don't stand volunteers in the brigade, because we are all lords and gentlemen. I am not promiscuous myself with the line, but some of our privates are, so may-be we'll find out your friend."

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I hope to be engaged——"

"I admire your spirit," retorted he, interrupting me, "I've been in seven pitched battles, and twenty-seven engagements. I know what it is. A little squeamish at first—but nothing after an hour or two. What height are you, sir?"

"I think nearly five feet seven," replied I.

"And growing, I guess," rejoined he. "Well, take my advice, sir. You seem a gentleman born, don't throw yourself away upon the line. I think I can manage your business. You are as promising a lad as I ever saw. We have not a vacancy, but we'll make one."

"I fear, sir, you mistake," answered I: "the gentleman to whom I am addressed is a musician."

"Is he, by George, sir? well, and a fine time they have of it. No drill, no exercise. Only got to play a march or two for the ladies upon field-days and guard-mounting. Can't blow a note sometimes from good living. I am fond of music, sir. May say that; I was promoted for it in Flanders. I'll tell you the story. We were one day retreating to take up a position with our right flank upon a canal, as may be there," and he pointed to the ditch, "and the Mounseers were peppering us with grape, as may be here," and he put his hand upon his back, "when crack comes a bushel full slap amongst the band, and knocks the black gentleman that carried the big drum bang into the water. 'O massa, ban master,' said the poor fellow, 'I be drown!'—'O my pig trum! God Almechtig, vat I shall do for my pig trum?' roared out Mr. Rauchundpauch, the master. 'Damn the big drum,' says I, 'help me to fish out Mr. Cross, or both will sink.' 'Tausend donner-wetter, saprement, der tiefel! vat's a whole band of niggers to my pig trum?' says

Rauchundpauch.—But do you understand German, sir?" demanded the sergeant.

"No," replied I.

"How should you?" exclaimed he; "you never were in Flanders. Well, that meant that Mr. Cross might go to the bottom, and play Turkish music to the devil for all Rauchundpauch cared. 'But I'll be hanged if he shall,' said I, so in I jumped and hoisted him on my back, when bang comes a round shot, and carries off his head. 'Rear rank take open order,' said I; so down he sank, and I crawled out with the big drum, and was made corporal for my services. But shall I tell you why the nigger was christened Cross."

"If you please, sir," answered I.

"Well, then," replied he, "one of our cruisers boarded a slave-ship off the coast of Africa, and the captain found a whole nest of little black fellows upon deck, who were all as like one another as a bundle of cartridges; so, taking a liking to the looks of one of them, he snicked a cross upon his woolly head to know him from the others, christened him after that same, and made him a present to the regiment."

By the time I had explained to him my object

in going to London, we reached Missenden, and he very good-naturedly offered to put me up at the White Hart, where billets were prepared for himself and the corporal, his party being lodged elsewhere; an offer which I accepted with greater pleasure, as he promised to assist me in finding out the gentleman in London, and to mention my name to the lieutenant of his company, who, he said, played the flute all day, to the great annoyance of his brother officers, but was said to be a very accomplished man by all the ladies at Chatham.

Whilst the sergeant was attending to his duties, I walked about, and fell in with one of the recruits, who had kept aloof from the rest upon the road, appearing extremely dejected, and no ways disposed to join in their merriment. He was a young man of pleasing exterior, but of grave deportment; and, by his language, of better education than all the others. "Excuse me," said he, laying his hand upon my arm, and asking me to walk with him up the street, "but unless you intend to accept the king's shilling, be upon your guard."

"What do you mean, sir?" said I.

"Mean," replied he, "why if you do not

keep your wits about you, they will contrive to slip a shilling into your hand, persuade you that you are bound by this as by a legal contract, carry you before a magistrate to be attested, and if you cannot redeem yourself by paying smart-money, you are enlisted and engaged, perhaps, for life."

"I have no intention to enlist," replied I, "and am not afraid."

"Well then, be cautious," said he, "do not give way to temptation. Do not drink, unless you have a stronger head than I judge from your years, and do not gamble unless you have a deeper purse than I guess from your mode of travelling. I heard the sergeant tell one of the crimps, who attend him as jackalls follow lions, and who are little better than sharpers and dealers in human flesh, that they must lay a trap for you this evening. I have not been long with the party, but I have seen enough of their mode of inveigling raw lads into the service, to be able to caution you. Take my advice, therefore, and so long as you remain in the sergeant's company, neither drink nor gamble, or you will repent when it is too late."

"I have no taste for one or the other," said I,

" but am equally thankful for your kindness. At the same time, from what the sergeant says, a soldier's life must be one of continued pleasure, and I should think, must lead to honour and noble distinctions."

" Delusion !" said he. " If once entrapped, you would soon discover its fallacies, and find that, however well fed or well clothed they be, few persons are more miserable than private soldiers. Slaves to the caprice of a thousand tyrants, the privations of war are, perhaps, the least galling of their sufferings, for these they in some measure share with their superiors. Words of kindness and of encouragement rarely greet their ears—they are treated as brutes without sense—they are saluted with oaths, ruled with rods of iron, and subjected to the degrading lash —often at the mere verdict of heedless schoolboys, urged on by unfeeling martinets—they are cut off, as it were, from all social intercourse with their fellow-citizens, and what is worse, from all prospect of the promotion or honours you talk of,—for in our service honours and distinctions are withheld from the soldier, who, unless by some rare stroke of good-fortune, cannot rise beyond the ranks, no matter how brave or well

conducted he may be. Such are some of the joys in store for you, if you enter your country's service."

"Then, sir," said I, "if you were aware of all this, why did you enlist?"

"Why," replied he, "as a last resource—as a last sacrifice; and yet I do not repent it. I would do the same to-morrow."

"It seems very strange," answered I, "that a man of your education and knowledge of the world should allow himself to be entrapped."

"I was not entrapped," replied he; "I enlisted with my eyes open. But lest you should think me a madman, I will tell you my story—it is short but sad."

We then sauntered into the meadows, seated ourselves upon a style, and he proceeded in the manner narrated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Recruit's tale—Which may serve as a warning to many a maiden how she swallows soft poison—If it comes home to any man's conscience, let the galled jade wince—In the meantime, reader, prepare your pocket-handkerchief.

"I AM a native of ———. My father, who was land-steward to the venerable nobleman, whose splendid property adjoins the borough, gave me an excellent education, and then, through the interest of his patron, placed me in a mercantile house in London, in which he invested the whole of his savings, under an engagement that, in due time, I should be admitted into partnership. All went on prosperously, the partners were well pleased with my assi-

duity, and I with the prospect of eventually becoming possessed of a handsome independence. We were in the Baltic trade, our transactions were large, and many of our speculations eminently fortunate. At length the day I so long impatiently awaited, arrived, and I was appointed junior partner, my poor father making over all his property to my name, and contenting himself with a yearly interest. I was as faithful a steward to him, as he had been to his noble patron, who, to the profound regret of his tenantry, was carried off by a sudden inflammation, and his title and property devolved upon his nephew.

"My father, who was advanced in years, and who had been long desirous to pass the remainder of his days in retirement, now renounced his situation, and withdrew, with my mother and sister, to a small habitation, which he rented from the young peer. I had obtained a few days' respite from business, and proceeded down to ——— to assist in establishing my family in their new residence, and there, for the first time, met our noble landlord. He was a young man of graceful and insinuating manners, of refined education, and of a more than ordinary

prepossessing countenance; in short, he was endowed with all those personal and mental advantages, which, perhaps, render the English aristocracy, that is, the better portion of them, pre-eminent amongst the chivalry of Europe. He had gained the hearts of the country ladies by promising them a ball and bow-meeting at the park, as soon as decency for his uncle's memory permitted; and he conquered the suffrages of his own tenantry, and excited the envy of others, by desiring my father's successor to return ten per cent. to the farmers upon the approaching rent-day: he was singularly affable to me, giving me permission to shoot over his manors, and inviting me to dinner; whilst his attentions to my family were of that open and generous nature, which win the affections, and lull all suspicion.

"My sister, who was entering her eighteenth year, possessed a combination of personal charms, that might have excited envy amongst the fairest and most noble of her own sex, and admiration amongst the most fastidious of ours. She had been educated, unfortunately perhaps, at a boarding-school—at one of those self-styled fashionable establishments where the solid im-

provement of the mind is too often sacrificed to the flimsy varnish of the person; where reprehensible tendencies are often augmented by evil communication—where the qualities most requisite in wives, mothers, or daughters, are too frequently neglected for superficial vanities, which are fraught with danger to themselves, and misery to their families—where empty frivolity, and romantic exaggeration, are substituted for that sound morality which can alone render women estimable in their own eyes, or in the opinion of those whom it is their destiny, as well as their desire, to captivate. My sister," ——here the recruit paused, and wiped away a tear from his eye; whilst I, mechanically pulling a branch of wild rose-buds from the hedge, raised it to my nose, and then plucking one off cast it from me—upon this he put his hand to his forehead, and after a moment's pause continued. "That insignificant action of yours embraces the whole moral of my story. Poor Fanny! the glass told her she was beautiful as the spring sunbeam. Admiring eyes, and poisonous flattery corroborated this truth, and, as ill fortune would have it, an old gipsey woman assured her that luck was in store for

her, and that a coronet glittered above her brow. Thus, when the young nobleman presented himself amongst us; when he filled her ears with eloquent praises of her beauty, with admiration of her graceful carriage and accomplishments—and followed them up with presents of game and professions of friendship for us, with gifts of flowers, and books, and declarations of 'esteem and interest' for her, the poor girl fancied herself a predestined countess, and that the gipsey's prophecy was about to be accomplished. What passed between his lordship and my poor sister, in private, I know not, but in our presence, his bearing and language were those of a mentor, or friend, rather than those of an admirer. He had excellent judgment in literature and music: he furnished her with such works from his own library as were best suited to enlarge and improve her mind: he descanted upon the beauties of English and French authors, with the powers of an enlightened critic. He selected the finest musical compositions, and anxiously watched the intonations of her voice when she sang, and the execution of her fingers when she played, reprimanding her with candour, and praising her with discretion: he criticised her dress with

good-nature, but in the language of a man who was considered as an arbiter of taste. In short, sir, had she been his own sister, he could not have shown greater anxietyfor her improvement, nor more apparent disinterestedness in his attentions.

"It was in the midst of this state of things, that I returned one afternoon to the cottage, in company with the young peer: there I found a letter from one of my partners. I opened it, and if the cracking seal had been a bursting thunder-bolt, I could not have been more terribly overwhelmed; I sickened as I read, and, ere I came to the last line, staggered against the wall, and should have fallen, had not the peer received me in his arms, demanding the cause of my distress. 'Read, my lord, read,' was the only reply I could make, as I placed the fatal paper in his hands."—The poor fellow again hid his face, and sobbed bitterly—I did not venture to interrupt him, so he proceeded. "With a hesitating voice, his lordship read aloud the following lines—

"'Lombard-St. Dec. 1804.

'My dear Freeman—I write to you in a state bordering upon distraction: our senior partner

has proved himself the blackest villain upon earth: we yesterday discovered that he had been gambling deeply upon 'change, and, to make good his losses, had accepted bills in the name of the firm: he has drawn out of the bank, or disposed of the whole of our capital and cash, and has absconded, as we believe, in a vessel which left the river last night for America. In short, we are ruined, irrevocably ruined; shame and disgrace are brought upon our honest names; desolation and misery upon our unhappy families. Before this reaches you, our failure will be declared, and if we are not committed to prison, we must be cast pennyless upon the world. Your unhappy friend and partner,

'C. SIMMONS.'

"The peer had scarcely ended this fatal communication, ere my poor father clasped his hands, stared wildly about him, and then broke into a horrid, appalling laugh—a laugh that thrilled, still thrills through my heart. The ways of Providence are inscrutable. Was it mercy for the concealed future, or chastisement for some unknown past? God only can tell—but from that moment his reason fled—he

became an idiot, a wretched maniac. A month passed; I took courage to visit him in the mad-house, where he is confined: poor old man! I saw him, seated upon a bundle of straw, exposed to blows, to chains, to all the barbarous usage of his keepers. He neither spoke nor wept, but sat counting pebbles and bits of straw as if they had been gold; ever and anon bursting into those yells of hideous laughter, that harrow up the hearts, even of those who are accustomed to see God's most perfect creation abased to the level of brutes. Much as I love my father, I could not look upon him again in that state, for all the property I lost: if I did, I should lose my own reason: how, or why I have preserved it so long, Heaven best knows—for there are positions into which we miserable men are hurled, so terrible, so overwhelming, that if we are not despoiled of our wits, it would seem that we possessed no wits to lose. Strange dispensation of Providence! Look to the world! look to the rich, the great, the powerful! see them in the full tide of wealth, prosperity, and happiness; in the possession of all that earth can give, or fortune lend—without a care or thought: beauty at their feet—honours in their hands—coronets

upon their brows—the world to them a sea of joy—all around contributing to render life glorious;—not attained by sudden elevation, or transition, that might tend to disturb the soul's equipoise, but by anticipation, by gradation: born to it, born with it; accustomed from the early cradle to its glitter, to its splendour: and yet see them of a sudden taken aback like the well-trimmed vessel by the fell hurricane;—the rudder of their minds unshipped, their noble reason foundered—foundered in the full zenith of all that should conduce to render reason permanent. Ah! what mightier proof of God's power, what more awful evidence of man's weakness!

"Look again to the contrast; look to beings like myself—grovelling in wretchedness, blighted in hope and honour, blasted by the unexpected shafts of fate—hurled from honest prosperity to abject misery—assailed by all that adverse fortune and distress can accumulate upon our heads—look at us! reserved, perhaps, for a long life of consciousness and suffering: a black and dreary gulf before us, and retrospect more frightful still behind. O! if it were not sinful to fight against the dictates of Providence, I could wish this burning brain were ransacked

of its treasure!" He now jumped down, and walked about in great agitation.

I listened to all poor Freeman said with great attention, not, however, without my doubts that the period he seemed to desire had arrived; having heard that madmen were liable to sudden fits of passion, and to talk upon subjects of their own creation, as though persons and facts were before them, I held it prudent to get over the stile, and to be prepared to take to my heels in case of accident. However, after walking up and down a few seconds, he returned, and with a deep sigh, seated himself again upon the bar, saying, "Young man, I see by your manner you seem to doubt my sanity, and to look upon me with a suspicious eye. Fear not—I have been agitated, and who is there who would not, had they endured what I have." He then proceeded with his tale.

"As soon as we had placed my father in the hands of the medical attendant, the peer took me aside, and said, 'I pity you and your family, from the bottom of my heart. I am rich, I have interest, rely upon me. If you want a few hundreds for temporary use, take this draft—fill it up—and the only security I shall require, is

your acknowledgment of the debt.' I hesitated to accept it, but he pressed me in such generous and kind terms, that my scruples were overcome. I then bade adieu to my mother and sister, and started for London, to look after my affairs. Upon reaching Lombard-street, I found that our house, with all its contents, was in the hands of the sheriff—that our liabilities exceeded, by two thirds, the amount of our assets—that every shilling of mine and my father's property had been fraudulently abstracted—in a word, that I was reduced to beggary. Ere many hours, I became the inmate of a prison. Nothing remained for me, but to wait until a commission of bankruptcy could be issued, or to take the benefit of the insolvent act. Through the liberality of the majority of our creditors, I escaped the latter disgrace, and was upon the eve of regaining my liberty when I received the following letter from my sister, with one from my mother.

'Stratford-upon-Avon, Feb. 1805.

'Dearest brother—Your sorrows will shortly terminate; as mine have, I trust, for ever. I am now the happiest woman in the world, the

wife of Lord Valleybrook: we were married yesterday, by special licence, and ere many days, I hope to see you, not only at liberty, but placed in the situation which my dear kind lord says he shall procure for you, under government. Do not be angry with me for having concealed what was going on, from you and my dear mother—but my darling Ernest insisted upon my silence. I fear I did wrong in consenting to this, as well as in eloping from home, but I left a letter upon my table for mamma, that she might not be frightened. Ernest wishes to keep our marriage secret from his family until we return from our tour in Wales, when he intends to announce it to all the world. Pray, therefore, do not breathe a word to any human being about it, or you will offend the generous friend who has conferred so much honour and happiness upon your ever affectionate sister,

'Fanny Valleybrook.

'P. S. All I now want, dearest brother, is your forgiveness and congratulation: write to me soon, and send your letter to our house in Brook-street. I am so happy—so happy—and ten times more so, since I can now assist you, and take care of our dear mother.'

"The other letter, while it disapproved of Fanny's silence, palliated her conduct, and was full of thanksgiving at an event which was destined to confer so much happiness upon our family. Indeed, however much I might have condemned my sister for not confiding in me, I was so rejoiced at her good fortune, that I lost no time in sending her my congratulations in the manner she desired, and begged her to convey to her noble husband the expression of my gratitude, promising to maintain inviolable secrecy. Owing to the law's delays, nearly six weeks elapsed ere I regained my liberty.

"The first use I made of my enlargement, was to hasten to the country, and to place my poor mother in a small lodging more suited to our fallen condition. Here, I received another letter from my sister, stating that she should be in London in two days, that her marriage would be immediately made public, and that her husband's first object would be to provide for me. Wishing, from motives of delicacy, not to intrude myself too soon upon them, and thinking that Lord Valleybrook might require time to see the ministers to arrange for the situation he offered

to obtain me, I remained for another fortnight with my mother, and then proceeded to town.

"My first thought was to fly to Brook-street, to embrace my sister, and throw myself upon my knees before our generous benefactor. I know not why, but as I approached the door, my heart beat violently—a faintness, a tremor ran through my veins. I stood, and gasped for breath as I put my hand to the knocker, and twice retired ere I had courage to raise it. There were splendid lights in the drawing-room, and upon looking down into the area, I saw servants in rich liveries, moving to and fro, and all the signs of a grand entertainment. I feared that I might intrude at such a moment—but my impatience to see Fanny overcame my scruples, and I advanced again to the door, raised the knocker, and let it fall with a rap—like that of an importunate tradesman, in lieu of the brother of the beautiful countess who was presiding over the festival. I had not to wait long—the door was opened by the porter, who seemed little pleased at being roused from his leathern chair: he asked me my business in a surly tone, to which I replied, 'Is Lady Valleybrook at home?'

'Lady Valleybrook!' replied he, with a stare and grin, 'why she's been dead these ten years'—and he was about to shut the door in my face. 'I mean the young countess,' answered I.—'I reckon you are either mad or a thief,' retorted he, 'so be off.'—'I am neither,' replied I, 'I wish to see my sister, Lady Valleybrook; I insist upon seeing her, or, at all events, if she is at dinner, that you will beg one of the other servants to inform her that her brother is here.' The man stared the more at this, and then coughed forth a fat husky laugh, which brought the colour into my face, and made my eyes sparkle with indignation. At this moment the door of the dining-room opened. I heard bursts of merriment, and caught half a dozen words uttered by Lord Valleybrook, that convinced me no woman, at least no wife, could be present. Calming my rising choler, I therefore took out my card, gave it to the porter, and bidding him inform his master that I should call in the morning, I withdrew to my lodging, consoling myself with the idea that his lordship had not yet revealed his marriage, and that this was, perhaps, his last bachelor's dinner.

"It was in vain, however, that I essayed to

sleep. I thought the hours would never pass; it seemed as if the watchmen lingered longer than usual upon their beats, that the shop-boys would never take down their shutters, and replace their wares in the windows; it appeared that the mid-day hum, the buzz, the confusion, the running to and fro, which betoken the rising hour of the great world, would never come. I had not breakfasted; I had indeed eaten nothing the preceding night; I was faint and sick for want of food; so I entered a small eating-house, and, whilst the landlord was preparing me some food, I took up the morning paper, and one of the first paragraphs that struck my eye, were the following lines:—'We understand that the Earl of Valleybrook will shortly lead to the hymeneal altar the beautiful, accomplished, and only daughter of Lord Eaglehurst.'"

"Eaglehurst!" exclaimed I to Freeman; "good God, sir!—can it be possible? I saved her life—how, it matters not; but, alas! it would seem that I rescued her from one monster to fall into the hands of another. It is a strange coincidence,—but go on—go on."

Freeman continued. "The paragraph ended thus:—'The ceremony will take place imme-

diately after the arrival of the bride's noble father in London.' 'It is a lie, a d——d lie,' said I, aloud, dashing my hand amongst the china, overturning the table, and rushing towards the door. 'Holla! holla! please to pay for your breakfast and the broken cups,' said the landlord, springing after me. 'Why, d—n it, you are mad, I think,' added he, as he saw me staring wildly about me. Collecting my senses, I begged his pardon, paid his demand, and flew to Brook Street.

"Seizing the knocker, I rapped this time with such vigour as made the people in the street turn round, and quickly roused the porter from his chair. Upon seeing me, however, he nearly pushed the door in my face, and, without further preface, said, 'My lord is not at home.' 'Then I will wait,' replied I. 'I am sorry, sir,' replied he; 'but my lord left town this morning.' 'Where for?' said I. 'I don't know,' answered he. ''Tis false,' was my answer; 'by God 'tis false;' but, knowing the venality of this class of menials, I calmed my rage, and, putting my hand into my pocket, took from it one of the few remaining notes in my possession, and whispered to him, 'Tell

me where he is, or when he will be at home, and I will give you this.' The man turned round to look if any one was near, then nearly closed the door, and said, 'It's as much as my place is worth: but if you'll wait down by the square, you'll see him come home: he's ordered a hot bath about one o'clock.' I then slipped the note into his hand, and retired to the corner of the street, where I watched every coming passenger with fearful anxiety. At length I saw a hackney-coach draw up near the house. It was Lord Valleybrook who descended, and ere I could reach the door, he was within. Again I rapped—again the porter opened—again I demanded an interview, and was again refused. Excited to a state of frenzy, I pushed the man aside, seized his crutch, rushed to the foot of the staircase, where two or three other domestics met me. I then demanded to be shown to his lordship's room, and threatened to knock down the first that stood in my way. My agitated look and the weapon I carried inspired them with fear. One of them, whom I seized by the collar, and shook as if he had been a mere reed, pointed out a door, saying, 'There.'

"I lost not a moment, sprang forward, and, as I put my hand to the latch, Lord Valleybrook met me. 'What is this intrusion?' exclaimed he. 'Who are you, sir, that dare burst forcibly into my house? Robert, send for the police.' 'My lord, my lord,' replied I, 'where is my sister? Have pity, have mercy on me: a word from you can calm the horrors of my mind; if you deny me, dread the vengeance of a desperate man.' The peer had, in the meantime, retired to the table, whence he took up a pistol, cocked it, and said, 'How dare you, sir, or any other person, intrude upon my privacy?' 'All I want, my lord, is to see my sister, and to know if what I read this morning about Lord Eaglehurst's daughter be true.' 'I shall answer no questions, unless addressed to me in proper language, nor will I hold myself responsible to you or any other man for my conduct,' answered he. 'Then you are a villain, an infamous villain, and, by the God who made me, unless you satisfy me, I will have your blood, or you shall become the murderer of a whole family. Where is my sister? Is she your wife?' 'I have said that I would not yield to menace,' replied he, his lips quivering, and his

countenance becoming deadly pale. 'Then yield to prayers—to supplications. I implore you, by the generosity of that nature which I once venerated as I would have done my God, —by every sentiment of honour and mercy, I entreat you to release me from this horrid suspense—tell me if what I read is true. O no! this cannot be: you are too good, too virtuous, too noble, to have profited by the weakness of an innocent creature, who worshipped your image—who adored you as an emblem of the Godhead—who would have given her life for yours: it cannot be—impossible! You, the preacher of morality, the advocate of virtue, the contemner of vice,—you cannot have availed yourself of the miseries of a ruined family, to bring down eternal degradation upon their heads,—O no! I injure you, I insult you by the bare suspicion. Forgive me, my lord, forgive a poor man whose mind is racked by misfortune,—forgive me, my generous benefactor, —speak—speak,—where is my sister, and I will bless you!' Whilst this was passing, he knit his brow; his lips were compressed: the changing hues of pride, guilt, and remorse, flitted across his countenance, but he spoke

not. I knelt and clung to his knees,—yes, God forgive me for it, I grovelled to the earth before him; but it moved him not. Half frantic with this silent confirmation of my worst fears, I rose, sprang towards him, dashed the pistol from his hand, exclaiming, 'Dastard! villain!' and would have inflicted the mark of ignominy upon him, had not five or six servants entered the room, accompanied by two police officers. I was seized, pinioned, thrust down stairs, and conveyed to Marlborough Street, where, in default of bail, I was committed for the assault.

Recollecting the names of two or three friends in the city, and these amongst the creditors of the firm, I wrote to them, and, with a noble generosity, they came to the lock-up house, put in the required sureties, and I was once more set at liberty. As all further appeal to Lord Valleybrook would be vain, I was resolved to obtain a writ of habeas in order to force his lordship to produce my sister.

Upon laying the matter before the solicitor of our late house, he fully confirmed my fears; for he said that a friend of his, Lord Eaglehurst's lawyer, had told him that a treaty of

marriage was certainly on foot, though apparently against the wishes of the young lady.

As I was returning from Lincoln's Inn, and turning the corner near St. Giles, a handsome equipage advanced rapidly. Absorbed in thought, I did not see it until it had nearly passed. One glimpse inside was, however, sufficient: it was my sister. I turned, and called, but the servants either heard not, or would not hear; I followed as fast as my legs would carry me, but without overtaking it. I contrived, however, to keep it in sight, until at length it stopped at a small house in the neighbourhood of Fitzroy Square, where my sister entered. In a few seconds more, I was at the door, and asked for Lady Valleybrook; the servant told me that no such person lived there—that the lady I saw descend, was Mrs. Dorval; but, as I spoke loudly, poor Fanny heard my voice, and in an instant more I was in her arms.

"Resplendent in beauty, youth, and health, beaming with confidence and love, she pressed me to her heart, and for some time did not perceive the anguish of my mind, or the bitter agony of my feelings. 'Oh! now that you are come,' said she, 'my happiness is complete. I

expect Ernest back in an hour's time, and in a few days, I am to remove to Brook Street, and our marriage will be publicly announced.' 'In a few days!' replied I: 'alas, poor girl!' 'Good God, George!' said she; 'what means this sorrow?—what this wild look? You are ill, dear brother: the sufferings you have gone through have affected you; but all this will soon be over, and my dear Ernest——' 'Is a villain,' replied I; 'you are deceived, basely, infamously deceived: you are not——' 'George,' answered the poor girl, 'I love you as I do my soul's welfare,—I would die to serve you; but you must not forget that Ernest is my husband, and that his honour is dear to me as my own: he is incapable of deceit: he is good, pure as an angel: he never could deceive you, or any human being. Dear, dear brother, what do you mean? you are unjust to Ernest—indeed you are.' 'O that I were,' replied I; 'alas! I tell you that he is a thrice-damned villain, and you —you—his victim!' 'Father of mercy! what has happened?' answered she, quivering as the fragile reed shaken by the passing ripple. 'Happened!' retorted I; 'you have been imposed upon, betrayed, seduced, by the artfullest wretch that ever cursed humanity!' 'Oh!'

said she, rising up with almost heavenly dignity, 'no, no !—impossible, impossible ! George, you must be mad: Ernest is far above so foul a deed.' 'Alas ! my poor girl,' replied I; 'would that it were so. I know the facts, the damning facts, too well: I have heard of the contract that will seal your disgrace and mine.'

"To describe the agony of the scene that passed is beyond my power. Poor girl ! nature would have its way. Hiding her head in my bosom, she wept bitterly; then, throwing herself upon her knees, she called upon God to forgive her, pledged her innocence, and told me in broken words how the imposture, for such it was, had been performed; then, with a degree of more than human force, she said, 'Let us fly !—take me with you—let me go anywhere —I will not see him again—God ! God ! my heart will burst.'

"At this moment the servant entered, and brought a note from Lord Valleybrook; she threw it from her with a look of shuddering abhorrence, and I picked it up; it ran thus:—

'Dearest Fanny,—Particular business renders it impossible for me to see you this morning; I shall be with you late this night, after the

House of Lords. I have a communication to make, which will require much courage on my side to impart, and no less upon yours to hear; but I trust to your forgiveness, as you may eternally upon my devoted affection.

'Ever your affectionate,

'ERNEST.

'P. S. I have seen your brother; he has behaved in a manner that precludes our ever meeting again; but I forgive him for your sake, and will fulfil my promise in providing for him.'

"'There,' said I, 'there, can you longer doubt? and he dares insult us still further with offering us the price of his infamy and ours.' My sister heard this without quailing: she seemed to have adopted some desperate resolution that lent her almost supernatural courage. She rang the bell, she called the country girl that acted as her waiting-woman; she bade her collect the dresses, jewels, and presents, she had received from Lord Valleybrook, and pack them up; she cast away her splendid trinkets and bracelets, took off the fine dress she had on, and then, saying, 'Thank God, I have yet a few things left that were my own,' she attired

herself as simply as she could, and added, 'Brother, dear brother! if you will not cast me off, if you will shelter me, I will accompany you this evening: never, never, will I set eyes upon him again. O my poor mother! how will she bear this horrid news?'

"After a short conversation, in which she displayed extraordinary composure and firmness, I bade her adieu, and hastened to the hotel to prepare a chamber; and, having written to my mother to break the fatal intelligence, I returned to Fitzroy Square. It was already late when I reached the house. The maid stated that my sister had gone out shortly after dark, saying that she should soon return. I waited in extreme anxiety; but she came not. Hour after hour passed by, and I sat listening with a beating heart to each footstep in the street. I asked if she had any acquaintance: I was told none. The agony of my mind exceeded all belief. Where to seek for her, I knew not. At length, towards midnight, a hackney-coach drove to the door,—it opened,—I bounded to the top of the staircase: it was Lord Valleybrook! He was about to retreat when he saw me; but I sprang forward, and said, 'Fear not,

my lord, I am no assassin. Though you have murdered my honour,—all that is dearest to me in the world,—I will not lay hands upon you here. All I ask is, that you will repair the injury you have done my sister. As a man, as a Christian, save her and us from infamy—yourself from eternal remorse. I will give you twenty-four hours to consider,—if not, your blood be upon your own head; for, by the just God who looks down upon us, if you refuse, you or I must cease to breathe.' 'You may murder me if you please, sir,' replied he; 'but intimidation can effect nothing with me. You know my secret; and since you propose terms, I will offer you mine. I will make every amends in my power for the past, save the one you require; I will settle a thousand a-year upon her: I will provide for you handsomely: she can soon find a husband amongst her own class, and, if you keep your own secret, no one will be the wiser; but marry her I cannot—will not. Where is she?'

"'Where!' said I, controlling my fury and anguish; 'no matter where: speak to her again you never shall, so long as I have an arm to protect her. Go, go, my lord, you know my con-

ditions, and I yours—go!'—and so saying, I threw open the door, and pointed to it. 'Take warning, my lord,' added I, 'let me meet you when I will, I will be avenged. I scorn your protection, I curse your infamous offers, I call down the maledictions of God upon your iniquity, and may he grant that your remorse may be equal to the atrocity of your crime. Go.'

"'Not until I have seen Fanny,'—and he moved towards the bed-room door. 'Enter,' said I; 'enter into that room, which has been polluted with your presence; you will there find the spoils of your victim,—you will find the accursed gifts that she has cast from her as she would the poisonous habit of a leper; but you will not find her.'

"'Have you removed her?' 'No,' answered I. 'God only knows where she is. She quitted the house soon after dark, promising to return ——; perhaps ——, and yet, that is impossible, —she has too much strength of mind, too much religion. She has sinned, but she is yet pure in thought, and God will forgive her as I do. O villain! villain! I would not exchange her degraded misery for the stings of your proud heart; but go, or I shall lose my patience.'

" ' I shall go,' answered he, for the first time showing some emotion; ' I shall go; and if money or interest can detect her place of retreat, I will. Listen, sir,' continued he, ' your sister is an utter stranger to London; she has never been out of this house except in her carriage; she has been six hours absent. You may think that she is in Brook Street: you are deceived, by God you are: I came direct from home. She is not there: no time must be lost in seeking for her. Once more, think of my terms.'

" ' Curses on your infamous terms,' rejoined I: ' remember mine.' He then departed, and I continued walking up and down the room for some time. At length, my fears became so much excited, that I determined to set out in quest of her. But how to search for a young woman in the mazes of London! I asked the watchmen round the neighbourhood: none could afford me any intelligence; I went to the police-offices, offered rewards, and was coming away in despair, when one of the officers entered, and told me he had seen a person dressed as I described passing Charing Cross, and proceeding in the direction of the Horse Guards.

I flew towards the spot, and took him with me. There some of the miserable outcasts of her own sex had seen her proceeding towards Westminster Bridge. Upon reaching the bottom of the ascent, I interrogated the watchman, who said, 'Why, sir, I don't think it be of much use to look for her that way. Did she wear a hat like this?' 'Tis hers! 'tis hers!' answered I. 'Well then, your honour, you'll find her in the watch'us.' 'Thank God! thank God!' I ejaculated, as I hastened to the receptacle of vice and crime. We entered, and there she was—a corpse! She had descended the bridge-stairs, cast herself into the stream, and, although the watchman had given the alarm, and a boat had pushed off to the rescue, life was extinct ere she was drawn forth. The poor victim's body was then removed to a neighbouring tavern to await the coroner's inquest. The verdict was insanity: God grant its truth. As I sat there waiting for the jury, I wrote the following lines to Lord Valleybrook:—

'My lord, — Your wretched victim's body awaits a coroner's inquest. If you have courage, come and see what your infamy has done; but no—beware; her blood calls for vengeance: you

shall become the murderer of her brother, or that brother will have your life.—G. FREEMAN.'

"He answered not.

"I had just committed the remains of my poor sister to their last home, and was sitting brooding over the means of vengeance I ought to adopt, when a person requested to see me. I rose to meet him: it was a sheriff's officer, who, exhibiting a writ, said, 'I arrest you in the name of Lord Valleybrook.' To remonstrate was vain: his suit was for the money lent me."

"Monstrous, unfeeling villain!" said I to Freeman; "and *he* the husband of the beautiful daughter of Lord Eaglehurst!"

"No," answered he; "I wrote forthwith to the young lady and her father, detailing all the frightful circumstances, and, upon the following morning was visited in the sponging-house by the earl and his son, Lord William Toryville."

"William Toryville!" exclaimed I; "can it be possible? Can the daughter of Lord Eaglehurst and Lord Toryville be the same?"

"They are," replied he; "at least Lady Delphine Toryville is Lord Eaglehurst's daughter. Are you acquainted with them?"

"I am, I am," answered I; "but no matter, —go on, I beg."

"Well," continued he, "they listened to my tale with every symptom of horror and disgust. They thanked me for my communication, and, with tearful eyes, compassionated my unhappy condition. Not content with this, the generous nobleman called for the sheriff's officer, and, giving him a check for the amount of my debt, I was discharged. They then took leave of me, saying, in reply to my threats of vengeance upon Lord Valleybrook, that the marriage with Lady Delphine was irrevocably broken off, and that his lordship had left London that morning, as they understood, to travel abroad. 'But were it otherwise,' said the earl, 'I recommend you to abandon all further attempts upon his person. Menaces or aggression can only terminate in your being again committed to prison for an assault, and thus depriving yourself of the means of assisting your mother.' Alas! in the whirlwind of wretchedness and agony in which I had been enveloped, I had nearly forgotten her, nor had she replied to my last letter. I therefore hastened back to my hotel, and, having a few shillings yet remaining, took coach, and proceeded to the country.

"But my cup of misery was not yet filled. Upon reaching her lodgings, the people of the house informed me that she was exceedingly ill. I rushed to her apartment, and there I found her nearly speechless. The sight of me revived her a little, and as I gently raised her head and pressed her attenuated body in my arms, she wept, and blessed me—blessed her Maker that she had once more been permitted to embrace her faithful child. I spoke words of comfort and hope into her ear—told her I never would leave her more; that as soon as she recovered, we would remove elsewhere, and that in the meantime, I would consider upon some project for our future livelihood. But I did not tell her that which I too soon learned. A year's rent was due to Lord Valleybrook: other debts pressed heavily—creditors were clamorous. Our misfortunes, in lieu of exciting pity, seemed to harden men's hearts. My sister's disgrace and dreadful fate were bandied about from mouth to mouth. Those who formerly envied the accursed favours of our mortal enemy now rejoiced at the success of his machinations, and said we deserved our fate for aspiring to a condition above our own. Where,

a few weeks previous, I had found smiling faces and outstretched hands, I now met lowering countenances and closed doors. I applied to those whom my father and family had loaded with benefits: these benefits were forgotten, and black ingratitude was the only return. The physician and apothecary refused to attend, unless they were paid. Even the most necessary tradespeople declined serving us; and, as if fate were determined that we should drain the last dregs of bitterness, an execution was thrown into our lodging by Lord Valleybrook's agent, and the very bed upon which lay my wretched mother, was seized! In vain I asked for delay, in vain I parted with my watch and the few articles which the creditors of our firm had spared to me in pity for my misfortunes. They were barely sufficient to redeem the debt for rent, and to save my poor mother from being cast upon the floor. I implored more than once those whom I had assisted, to aid me with a trifling loan. I was rejected. I had not a penny left to buy food or medicine. As I passed homewards, if our abode of misery could be entitled to such a name, I heard a drum: I turned—it was a recruiting party. I knew

the bounty-money was liberal. Two or three pounds might save my mother's life. I called the sergeant aside and said, 'Carry me before the magistrate, and if you will advance me a small sum, I will enlist.'—He took me at my word, and I was attested. He then gave me two guineas, with which I flew to procure a few essential necessaries, and taking the hard-hearted doctor with me, hastened to my mother. But she was beyond the reach of human aid, beyond the stings of human misery. Her departing spirit hovered upon her lips. She gazed at me with a look of tenderness;—she feebly pressed my hand, and muttering a last blessing, died without a groan. Thank God! she was spared the knowledge of my sacrifice."

CHAPTER IX.

Freeman's story inspires me with very excellent resolutions—"Come, buy my young lambkins!"—I am present at an animated debate upon standing armies, during which, a brewer, barber, and the sergeant, show great knowledge of politics and history—My good resolutions meet the ordinary fate of piecrusts—The devil, under the form of a flaming punch-bowl, compasses me about, and a fallen angel comes to my assistance.

Whilst poor Freeman walked about to recover from the agitation produced by the recital of his melancholy story, I pondered upon the singular fatality that had thrown me in the way of a man whose destiny had placed him under an obligation to the only people on earth who were indebted to me—indebted to me for life. I now thought with joy and amazement upon the singular course of events which had rendered me

the instrument of salvation to Lord William's sister. I resolved to write to him, and without betraying my place of concealment, to recount all that had passed, and to claim the honour of having saved her life. Above all things, I rejoiced to hear of William's safe return, and of his sister's marriage not having taken place. For my heart was filled with sentiments towards her, the wildest that ever tormented the mind of a dreamer. Yes! monstrous and unnatural as it may appear, the name of Delphine Toryville had never been banished from my memory, nor had the image of Lord Eaglehurst's daughter been for a moment absent from my sight; although I was ignorant that they were one and the same person, yet they had been linked together and confounded in my memory. I felt for Delphine Toryville an indescribable ideal attachment like to that of one who worships the creation of his own visions. I did not know that it was love, for if I had, I should have thought myself bereft of reason. But it was a sentiment of veneration, of inexplicable tenderness, of admiration that had grown with my boyhood, been fostered by the constant praises of her brother, and been the subject of my dreams

in misfortune, and had haunted me as the image of some beautiful picture pursues the mind of the enthusiastic artist.

The imaginary adoration that I felt for William's sister, whom I had never seen, was embodied, or rather materialised, when I saw the living daughter of Lord Eaglehurst. Whether this were latent sympathy, attraction, or magnetism, Heaven knows, but it existed, and seemed as it were part of myself. And now that I found the two persons were one—now that—but the reader will think me insane. I, a vagrant,—an outcast—an unknown orphan —I, without a mouthful of bread, to dream of loving one of the fairest, the most exalted, and most accomplished daughters of the peerage! It was indeed madness—but let that pass. I treasured up the thought in my mind,—I revelled with secret luxury upon it, and would not have parted with the thrilling idealities which it distilled drop by drop through my heart, for an ocean of grosser realities.

Then, when I thought of Freeman's noble sacrifice, I remembered what the kind captain had said upon the road to Exeter, relative to human misfortunes; and when I compared my

fate with his, I drew comfort from it, and held my sufferings as a mere feather-weight to his. What right have I to complain, bitter as my destiny has been, said I to myself, when there are others whose miseries are so much more terrible than mine? I am yet young—a mere lad—the world is before me. If I can avert further evil by a life of virtue and industry, I will. I will not forget the fearful end of the dying convict at Buckingham, nor the noble example of the recruit at Missenden. I will learn to rely upon myself, and not to trust to others. For there is enough in Freeman's story to make one distrust—nay, execrate the human race. And yet, how strange! there again the beloved, the noble name of Toryville shone pre-eminent for goodness.

It was now getting late, and Freeman said he must return to his quarters to attend roll-call. On the road he asked how I had become acquainted with Lord Eaglehurst, and in return for his confidence, I promised to communicate my story to him on the following morning. We now separated, and as I entered the market-place, I saw a crowd of idlers shouting and laughing, whilst the more respectable inhabi-

tants stood at their doors and windows, and seemed to enjoy the sight. When I approached, I witnessed a spectacle of which I had often heard, but could not believe possible in a christian country;—in a country assuming to itself a superiority in religion, morality, and respect for decency and the laws. There was a man in the midst of the rabble, apparently an inferior artisan, accompanied by a woman of the same class. From the female's neck dangled a halter, the end of which was held by her companion. He led—she followed. He apparently glorying in the infamous exhibition,—she no ways blushing at the degradation. I asked a bye-stander what this meant. "Gin!" replied he, laconically.

"Gin!" repeated I. "What has this to do with gin?"

"O it's only Jem the cobler a selling his missus, that he may get a noggen or two of blue," replied my informer, who was a beadle, or constable.

"Sell," said I, "sell his wife! Is that allowed by law? Surely such an abomination cannot be tolerated in a christian country?"

"O yes, it be," replied he; "the law don't

say nothing against it. So long as they don't break the peace, nor kick up no row, nor go and marry again, for that would be bigamy, they may walk about with halters round their necks, curb-bridles in their mouths, or saddles on their backs, or anything else they likes—that's their look-out, and we have no right to interfere."

"I'll give eighteenpence, Jem, though she be uncommon fond of wetting her whistle," exclaimed a strapping fellow in a smock-frock.

"I'll clap on twopence more," roared out another.

"Two shillings for the woman, if you throw in the cord, I wants it for my ass," said a third, who stood by with a donkey loaded with sand.

"You shan't have her for less than half-a crown, and a quartern of gin," answered the husband; "she don't want soling nor heeling, nor don't mind welting no more than your ass."

An offer of three shillings was now made: the beastly vender snatched the proffered money, and staggered to the adjacent tap-room. The no less brutal purchaser took the woman

and led her away, and I retired to the White Hart, filled with disgust at this revolting spectacle. Strange did it appear to me, whilst so many members of parliament and magistrates were eager to restrict the innocent amusements of the poor, to silence music, to prevent travelling, to preclude labourers from purchasing a mouthful of bread or meat on Sundays—that not a single voice should be raised to stigmatise, or propose measures for putting a stop to, these humiliating and indecent exhibitions, which so justly tend to degrade the English people in the eyes of all other nations.

When I entered the inn, I found the sergeant, corporal, and several other persons assembled in the parlour; where the tables were strewed with pipes, tankards, and glasses of brandy-and-water. I was forthwith invited to partake of the good things, but, bearing in mind poor Freeman's advice, I merely put the glass to my lips, and listened to the conversation.

"Well, gentlemen, as I was observing just now," exclaimed a gruff-looking man, who it appeared was a brewer, and great politician, "I love old England as well as any man breathing. Elections are coming on, and I won't

support any candidate who votes for standing armies. Standing armies, indeed! what are they good for but to gag the people, and batter down Magna Charta? I'm for a monarchical government supported by voluntary contribution, based upon democratic principles, and defended by the invincible will of the sovereign people, the source of all power—I'm for a levy in mass whenever the country is in danger, and for branding as a traitor every man that don't rise gratis at the glorious appeal. I don't want to see the taxes doubled, and the poor man deprived of his pint of ale, merely to feed a parcel of idle military and cover their coats with gold lace."

"Halt!" exclaimed the sergeant: "by your leave, sir! not a word against the army! Remember, I have the honour to wear his majesty's livery—"

"Livery!" roared out the other, "that's the word, and that's what I call a sign of bondage, unworthy of British freemen; I say, you are paid by your country; and fed by your country; so, if you do wear livery, as you call it, it is your country's; and not that of the king, who lives upon the sweat of his people. But what do you want with fine coats, and gewgaws? What's

the use of all your hairy caps but to pain your heads? what's the use of gold lace but to turn those of the women? It's a useless waste of the public money."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Farnham, it is for the good of what the poet calls 'the liver and lights of the nation,'" exclaimed a gentleman who I believe was a chandler; "it's for the good of trade, sir: without commerce where would be your Rule Britannia, and wooden walls? what would become of your nursery for seamen, your tea, coals, coculus indicus, and candles? unless the rich were to spend their money in what you call gewgaws, we should have no trade; and without sailors and standing armies, we should be all slaves to Bonypart."

"You are wrong, sir," retorted the other; "it is the increase of standing armies that has swelled the national debt to its present frightful amount, and brought this once great, glorious, free and happy nation to the brink of bankruptcy. A few years more of standing armies, and we shall be reduced to wear wooden shoes, and be thankful to catch a frog instead of a beef-steak for supper. Why, sir, you might drink my beer for half-price, if it were not for the taxes, ex-

tracted from our pockets to pay the soldiers; you might have bread for nothing."

"The devil you might!" exclaimed a farmer, "and who would grow the corn? why, wheat don't pay the threshing now, and if it warn't for war and soldiers we should be ruined: they keep prices up—"

"Yes, there's the mischief: the only use they're of is to enable a corrupt ministry to meddle improperly in the affairs of other nations, and to involve the country in wars, without any other benefit than that of paying the piper: they are only kept to prevent the people from expressing their sentiments at public meetings in England, and to help the parsons to collect tithe and oppress their brethren in Ireland: I know what might be done, sir, if we were not eaten up by pensions and sinecures: I have some experience in the service; I've been in the volunteers."

"Volunteers!" said the corporal, puffing forth a column of pigtail; "volunteers! all smoke, sir, no more use than bone flints: awkward squads, sir, from centre to flanks. I drilled the St. George's myself for six months, and could never get them beyond the goose step."

"Perhaps they were all tailors," observed a dapper gentleman, who sat in the chimney-corner, and who was a hair-dresser and perfumer; "but I differ with Mr. Farnham: I am all for mighty Mars, as Sheridan says. Where the devil should we all be, sir, if it had not been for the battles of Cressy, Agincourt, and Blenheim? how the deuce do you think that Marlborough would have licked the French without a standing army?"

"Right, sir, I see you know your duty," echoed the sergeant. "We teach the light bobs to down on their bellies now and then—but the rest of us," and here he sprang up and shouldered his cane; "the rest of us, straight as halberds—no flinching, no bobbing of heads, legs broke, shot or shell, Flanders or Egypt, no matter—there we are bolt upright. Let us drink to the health of standing armies."

"With all my skin, sir!" replied the previous speaker—"landlord, another glass—hot with, if you please. Apropos of skin, as I was saying, what would the Black Prince have done without a standing army? a fine fellow by God, that Black Prince! a regular tartar, sir. Who is there that would not vote for negro emanci-

pation when England owes half her glory to a black prince? we'll drink his memory, sir, and freedom to all men of colour."

"Spoke like a man," exclaimed the sergeant, "here's my hand. We've five of them in our band, as fine fellows as ever trooped after colours. You see I'm bald, sir—"

"A close shave, that, Mr. Sergeant!" said the Missenden hair-dresser; "you wore a wig, sir, perhaps?"

"I ask your pardon," rejoined the other, "my own, every hair of it—I lost it by a twenty-four pound shot in trying to save a black drummer. I'll tell you the story."

"Excuse me for interrupting you, sergeant," said the brewer; "I hate cant—I'm no white-washer—I'm a plain-spoken man—I say charity begins at home. Why don't you look to Ireland? Talk of slaves! what are they?"

"Damned papists!" replied the sergeant: "I wouldn't enlist one of them, not for all the smart in the kingdom."

"Papists!" retorted the brewer, "and what's the harm of that? So you make all this rumpus about liberating a parcel of black heathens, who were born to slavery amongst their damned

snakes and elephants, and have no more idea of constitutional government than crocodiles, and you won't allow common justice to the Irish, who are our fellow-christian brethren, and haven't got so much as a lizard or blind worm in their whole country. Fine times these, and fine legislation this of ours. How we go on emancipating blacks abroad, and refusing to emancipate whites at home! and here we are preventing the use of the lash in the plantations, and maintaining it in the ranks of the army."

"If you mean flogging, sir," said the sergeant, "I can't agree with you. No discipline possible without it, in our service: I don't mean to say but upon home duty, we might not bill them up in the black hole for two or three months, stop their pay, and serve out nothing but bread and water. But, bless you, unless you can build solitary cells, and keep them from light, exercise, and talking, they care no more for a couple of months' Savoy prison, than I do for a Savoy biscuit. I don't say but what I've seen colonels who took as much pleasure in having men flogged as in eating their dinners. But that's a rare case, and in general, you may take your oath that the man who goes to the halberds, deserves

his ration. I'm only a sergeant, sir, but I know what the soldiers think—I'll bet my sword to a rush, that they would be sorry to have the punishment abolished altogether. Besides, upon service, what are we to do? Can't bill them up there; can't imprison them before the enemy; why, in some regiments, you'd want one half a battalion to guard the other; a dozen or two on each shoulder can't hurt no man. People talk of the soldiers being enemies to it. So those may be that deserve it: but did you ever hear of a company court-martial, when the soldiers are judge and jury?"

"Can't say I ever heard of any such thing in my corps," said the brewer.

"May be, sir—but I'll tell you that there are not upon earth a set of more bitter devils than the privates, when they sit in judgment upon one another. I believe most soldiers would rather go before a court of officers, than before one composed of their own comrades. They never acquit, and the punishments they award would make your teeth chatter."

"That's all right, sir," exclaimed the politician, "quite consistent with the spirit of the constitution: every man ought to be tried by his own

peers, and not by a parcel of young lords and dandies, that care no more for cutting a poor fellow to slices than they do for a crimped salmon."

"Officers, and non-commissioned officers must do their duty, sir," replied the sergeant; "and if you knew the kind of stuff we have to deal with, you'd only be surprised the drummers ever slept: why, sir—no offence to the gentlemen I have recruited—we get nothing, hardly, but the riffraff of the country—thieves, drunkards, vagrants, idlers, and any rubbish that can't gain a livelihood by other means. Many of them from jails: others who have been already whipped by the common hangman; few able to read or write, and still fewer with any of those principles that ought to inspire a soldier's heart. Devils to fight, sir! that's true, and that the Mounseers know to their cost, and as you'd have seen if you'd been in Flanders and Egypt. And, with this stuff, we've got to make clean, honest, and obedient men, and expect them to read bibles, and turn out like new cross-belts. People talk of the French and Prussians. What would you say if we sent our men hopping about the streets with a twelve pounder ball tied

to their legs, or shot them, as they do in France? Or what would you think if you saw them shut up in a lathen cage, as they do in Prussia? where a poor devil is glad to convert his loaf of bread into a seat to prevent the wooden edges from eating his flesh."*

"Don't talk to me of Prussia and France, sir," retorted the other; "I am a true Englishman, I don't care if every mother's son of a foreigner was flayed alive: what are wooden shoes to me? I love my country, and maintain that if you can't keep your army standing without the lash, you had better lay it down altogether: I repeat it's a disgrace to the nation; but I'll tell you what it is, sergeant, it all comes from patronage and sinecurists. If you'd open the doors of promotion to soldiers, if you'd do away with

* The sergeant probably alluded to the punishment called *die Latten,* (the laths,) a sort of dark chamber, the floor of which is composed of thin pieces of wood laid in edge-ways, so as to render it impossible for the prisoner to sit or lie down, without being so seriously incommoded as to prevent sleep. The use of this machine is much exploded in Prussia, and only resorted to in extreme cases. The confinement is limited to four days, with bread and water.—"*Preussens bewaffnete Macht.* Page 466. Berlin, 1830."

purchasing commissions, and let merit, industry, and good conduct hold the key, instead of rank, money, and parliamentary influence, you'd have a better class of men flock to your standards, and the point of honour, instead of the point of the whip, would keep them to their work."

"And what would you do with all the rogues and vagabonds?" said the chandler: "why, if you took all the good to serve for soldiers, we should only have to serve the bad, and that wouldn't do for trade."

"Besides, sir," exclaimed the barber, "every creature after its own kind, as the scripture says. Men are not all born to be lord mayors. We must have 'prentices as well as masters; rich as well as poor; great as well as small: I am no leveller, sir. I honour the aristocracy: a fine time of day we should have if we were all masters and no servants."

"Servants, sir!" exclaimed the brewer; "did you ever hear of America?—they've no servants there,—nothing but helps: they are all free, happy, and united."

"The devil they are!" replied the barber; "why, half the country are slaves, and would cut

your throat without benefit of clergy, if you talked of giving a black man his liberty."

"You are right, sir," said the sergeant; "we can't be all front-rank men—can't all be in the flank companies. I am no politician: I do my duty, and know my duty. Bad or good halberds, or no halberds, we licked the French when we met them in Flanders or Egypt: and now you talk of promotion, I'll wager a quart that there are more non-commissioned officers that refuse commissions than care to accept them. Every man, as that gentleman said,—I'll drink his health, with your leave,—every man is not born with a gold spoon in his mouth, or the three stripes on his arm. What's the use, as we say in the Coldstreams, to wear epaulets on your shoulders, if you have not got money to pay for your mess? and, since you grumble about soldiers, how would you like to pay for that? It's all very well for the French, who live upon other men's rations abroad, and can put up with a little sour vinegar and a broiled frog at home, to be made officers; but, if I may be so bold, what's the use of snapping a musket if you've no powder in your pan: we know how to take up our distance, sir; and,

though you'll not believe it, I've seen more than one commission go begging in our regiment."*

"What regiment was that, sir?" demanded the brewer, who seemed incredulous.

"The Coldstreams, sir," answered the sergeant. "We'll drink their health. Here's the old '*Nulli secundus*,' gentlemen; off with heeltaps: we'll fire a volley."

As soon as the man of war had tossed off his glass, which he did with one foot resting upon the table, as indicative of mounting the breach, the barber said, "I flatter my wig I'm a bit of a scholar, sir, and know something of history; but, if I might be so bold, why are you called Coldstreams?"

This was rather a poser to the sergeant, who, unfortunately, had not had the advantage, at that period, of being able to search for antecedents in the very elaborate and interesting

* We believe it occurred during the Peninsular war that commissions in the line were offered to two battalions of the guards, then in Portugal, and that it was not without difficulty sergeants could be induced to avail themselves of the favour. The motives assigned for this hesitation were nearly similar to those advanced by the recruiter.

history of his own corps, which has since enriched our military archaiology. But a man who had overcome the Invincibles in Egypt, and assisted at the downfal of Valenciennes, was not likely to have his flank turned by so trifling a difficulty as a question of regimental etymology.

"Coldstreams, sir!" said he, "why the regiment's as old as the Tower. As you are a scholar, sir, you must have heard of William the Conqueror, who, though he was a Frenchman bred and born, was as good a soldier as ever shouldered a pike"

"Ay," said the barber; "and if we'd had a standing army in that day, I wish I may never —— if they wouldn't have powdered his hair properly."

"Powder was not invented, sir, nor constitutions either," exclaimed the brewer, with a sneer: "the English were a parcel of mongrels in those days—all slaves, only fit to be trampled on by the French. Let them try that game now, and they'll find this once great, glorious, free, and happy nation, rise up in one solid mass, in despite of taxation, sinecures, and pensions. We'll unfurl the banner of liberty, as

guaranteed by our glorious constitution, and present an invincible ægis of volunteer freemen, more impregnable than the rock-bound shores of Albion, and all the Martello Towers from John o' Groat's house to the Land's-end."

"Pioneers to the front!" exclaimed the sergeant, who was not pleased with the interruption. "By your leave, no impediments on the line of march. If you wish me to act fugleman, and show you how the regiment got the name of Coldstreams, please to shut pans. Well, when this William,—for he wasn't a conqueror until he outflanked us upon Brighton downs, and wouldn't have been so then, if all the other corps had done their duty like us,—when he landed in the night from his Boulogne flotilla, the English army advanced to meet him, and took up a position upon some heights, as may be here: our regiment was in reserve in columns of companies right in front, as may be there;"—and thereupon he dipped his finger into the tankard, and delineated the field of battle upon the table;—"we'd a church or meeting-house upon our left flank, and a river in our rear, as may be here;"—and he traced the stream with gin-and-water, and somewhat irre-

verently stuck up a tobacco-stopper to represent the holy edifice: "the baggage and such like, as right and proper, was two days' march in the rear; the first line was about a musket-shot in front, with what dragoons and light bobs they had skirmishing in advance. But our general was a bungler, and be d——d to him. Some said he had been drinking over night; others, that he had been bought by the Mounseers; so he let the French creep round his flank, and clubbed his whole army; and, as William was as sharp as one of your razors, sir, he advanced at double quick, charged into the midst of the poor fellows as they were counter-marching, and, before they could say 'prime and load!' killed half, and forced the rest to retreat across the river. But our colonel, who was a brave man, rode up to the head of our grenadiers, and cried out, 'Britons never shall be slaves! It's a d——d cold day, lads; but you'll soon have fire enough to warm you: form line upon the right centre company; one volley, and then give them the bayonet.' Sharp's the word, and there we were, just as if we stood upon parade, as may be here;"—and again the gin-and-water was made serviceable

for military plan-drawing. "The colonel was right: on came the Mounseers, and poured in such a fire as the devil never saw."

"Fire!" said the brewer; "why, I say again, powder was not invented more than porter; and in those days they didn't know the use of bayonets more than Highlanders do of knee-buckles."

"Order! order!" exclaimed the barber; "a fine for interrupting the gentleman. I am a bit of a scholar: I've read Milton: the sergeant's right. Powder was invented in the battle by which the devil lost paradise: the angels used four-and-twenty pounders and rifle barrels."

"I'm no scholar," roared out the sergeant, who was getting excited with the smoke, as well as the fumes of his own libations. "I don't care a day's rations for Paradise Lost; but I do for the honour of the Coldstreams, which were not the Coldstreams then. Attention, gentlemen. Crack — bang — whizz — came bullets, bombs, and shells; but we let them go their rigs, until up they marched within forty yards: pr-rrr! goes our volley, — hurrah! goes our charge, and away ran the Mounseers, and we after them: every bayonet had its billet in a

Frenchman's back. But we were too brave by half; so on we rushed, killing, wounding, and capsising all before us, and would have had the day all our own if our old woman of a general had sent a few battalions to help us. But William, seeing us all alone, said to his aide-de-camp, 'I shall not be conqueror if I don't take the shine out of those fellows; so order up the reserves: it's a pity, too, to hurt them; so let's try and surround them.' *

"'Please your majesty," answered the aide-de-camp, 'you'd better not count your chickens before they're hatched: I know the regiment: they won't yield to all France and Russia to boot: it's the Royal Bucks Grenadiers.'" This artful compliment to the county produced great applause, and an immediate call for a bowl of punch to drink the sergeant's health, mingled with cries of "order!" and "silence!" After a pause, the sergeant continued, "So, as we were rushing on like mad, skivering all in our way, our colonel saw twenty thousand fresh men coming on; so he rode bang to the front, and hallooed out, 'My lads, we've got ourselves

* Napoleon, by a curious coincidence, expressed the same admiration of the Scots Greys, at Waterloo.

into a rummish mess, and if we don't look sharp, they'll serve us out double rations.* Form square!' And then, with tears in his eyes, he ordered us to retire upon that river. But we fell steadily as the monument; two hundred and fifty only out of one thousand two hundred as fine fellows as ever wore cross-belts; upon this, up rode the French general, and called out in their language, '*Rendez vous!*' Perhaps you don't speak French, gentlemen; but how should you? you never were in Flanders or Egypt; — well, no matter,—that means— 'We'll make every mother's son of you officers if you will come over to us.' We had but a few cartridges left; but we gave them a volley by way of an answer, and kept falling back steadily. When we got to the water's edge, we found that our d——d fool of a general had gone and blown up the bridge; and so we had nothing left but to ford it up to our necks; so in we walked, only one hundred left out of the two hundred and fifty, and all the officers killed except the youngest ensign: rare promotion, sir! Well, in the mean time, the Mounseers

* The British Guards evinced the same temerity at Talavera, and suffered severely in consequence.

had got across the river by a bridge, as may be down there, and lined the bank,—ten thousand of them if there was a man; only fifty of ours remained; so the ensign called a council of war. Some said they'd sooner be drowned than surrender; but, as that was of no use, they hoisted a white pocket-handkerchief, and beat a parley; upon which, William, who was a conqueror now, and a good fellow after all, promoted the ensign to be lieutenant-colonel in his service, gave him the medal for bringing the regiment out of action, and said, 'Now, my Royal Bucks, as I am King of Great Britain, I'll put your gallant conduct into general orders, take you into my guards, and give you rank accordingly; and—' says his majesty to the poor fellows, who were all dripping wet, 'henceforth and for ever, I christen you Coldstreams, in commemoration of the water where you fired your last shot, and laid down your arms. 'Which we wouldn't have done, please your Majesty,' said the ensign, 'if we had had any one to second us.' 'That's true, by St. Peter,' replied the conqueror; 'and so, from this time, you shall wear upon your colours and appointments the words '*Nulli secundus*,'— which, as you are a

scholar, sir," added the sergeant, addressing the barber, "you know means 'No one to second us.'"

In the meantime, although I had been cautious at first in not indulging too freely, I felt my spirits excited, and my head becoming wild and confused; but, instead of retiring as I had been advised by Freeman, I approached a table where the corporal and others were playing at cards, and where they not only pressed me to partake of their liquor, but, as my ill stars would have it, induced me to join the game. Alas! from one glass I proceeded to another, and from one deal to a second. At first, I was successful. Fortune, or the devil, whichever it may be, seemed inclined to shower her treacherous favours upon me, as she commonly does upon all young beginners; but this was of short duration. A turn of ill luck came. Flushed with liquor, and irritated by adverse fortune, I drank deeper, and betted more freely, being assured by one of the recruits, who was my partner, that we could not fail to recover our losses in another hand or two. What happened after this, I scarcely know,—my senses wandered—the room turned round with me—my eyes

were overspread with a dizzy film: I saw fifty more lights and faces than were actually present. I remember feeling a clammy chilness—then a burning heat and weakness—then Freeman coming in and having an altercation with one of the men for cheating me: my head dropped first upon the table, and then my body under it; and after that, I believe they carried me into a corner, where, for a short time, I heard confused noises, oaths, curses, songs, and shouts of laughter: I laughed myself, as idiots laugh, and then slept or swooned.

When I awoke, the rays of the dawning day had penetrated into the chamber, and eclipsed the last crackling, guttering light of an expiring candle. I was still lying in the corner where I had been deposited. The floor was strewn with fragments of broken pipes and glasses: the tables were still covered with tankards and remnants of the night's carouse, and the air was infected with the fumes of tobacco and spirits. The anguish of a thousand fires racked my head, and my parched tongue clove to my mouth, whilst my body was chill as ice. The first thing that struck me when I rubbed my eyes, and looked around, was a hat, which had

served me for a pillow, decorated with a profusion of ribbons. I looked at it: it was mine. Recollection and repentance, those twin successors of intemperance and folly, rose simultaneously before me. I felt in my pockets: everything I had was gone, save one shilling, one solitary, accursed, new shilling. The truth instantly rushed upon me. I had disregarded Freeman's advice; I had been lured to drink and gamble: I had evidently accepted of the fatal gage of service, and had lost the only means of redeeming myself. I looked at the hateful coin with a gaze of mingled dread and loathing. If the spangled head of a rattlesnake had stared me in the face, I could not have been more fascinated, more spell-bound, than I was at the glittering effigy of the king's profile, which lay in my hand. My first impulse was to open the window, to spring into the street, and fly; but a moment's reflection told me that I should be subjected to be tracked as a deserter, and that a second attempt to evade the laws would but add to the maze of troubles in which I was involved;—I therefore walked into the stable-yard, and, quenching my fever at the pump, determined, if I were taken before the

magistrate, to state how I had been trepanned, and trust to his justice to rescue me; besides, as the sergeant had told me there was no vacancy in the regiment, I thought he would not object to be saved the trouble of using his interest to procure my admission;—I therefore sauntered about, anxiously awaited the hour when the inmates of the house would be on foot, when doubtless the sergeant would come to reclaim his victim.

As I stood near the foot of the stairs, I saw one of the bed-chamber doors cautiously opened: a woman's head was protruded in the attitude of a person listening, and then part of her body, which, I observed, was furnished with an extra arm. As such Briarean additions to the human frame are not usual in this world, I concluded, in despite of all maxims of morality, that there must be another person behind: I was not wrong; for a second head soon appeared close to the first: it was that of a handsome young man, in a very splendid brocade dressing-gown. A few tender words, and a still more tender salute, now passed between the parties; and the female, who turned out to be the barmaid, stole down the passage with her shoes in her hand.

Remembering the dreadful vengeance I had brought upon myself by having been the involuntary witness of an interview between Nibshort and Mrs. Birchell, and fearing to enlist the barmaid against me at a moment when her evidence was so necessary to my assistance, I sprang back into the parlour, and sat myself down by the window; and, fortunately, I was not discovered; for the blooming White Hart Hebe, after pausing for an instant to put on her shoes, and to give the last finish to her toilet in the bar, took up her broom, and entered the parlour, where, upon seeing me, she burst into an immoderate fit of laughter.

What there was in my appearance to excite such mirth, I could not imagine. If my face was any way indicative of my heart's distress, it was calculated rather to have cast a gloom over the countenance even of that most joyous of all philosophers, Democritus, rather than to have elicited a smile from his lachrymose adversary. She surely could not be laughing at the success of the recruiter's scheme, or have so far departed from the humanity and gentleness of her sex, as to rejoice over the misfortunes of a fellow-creature, especially as Nature had been

kind enough to bestow upon him a more than ordinary portion of those dissolvents which, in most cases, produce a more rapid effect upon maidens' hearts, than did Hannibal's vinegar upon the Alpine Jungfrau. In despite of her beauty, I felt bitterly inclined to implant a slap on her right cheek, as a fellow to the salute she had received up-stairs upon the left; but I moderated my wrath, and said, "You seem merry, miss, this morning: I wish you joy of your good-humour, and, upon any other occasion, should not object to join in your laughter; but you are not the kind-hearted, sweet-faced creature I took you for, if you do not commiserate my fate, and lend me your assistance to escape from the snare into which I have fallen."

The only reply she returned was a burst of merriment still louder than the first. At length, seeing that I was becoming angry, she said, "Lawk! don't stand glowering there, like Tam O'Shanter on master's tobacco-box! I couldn't help laughing—no, not if I were at a funeral: —why, you are more like the Saracen's Head upon Snow Hill than a Christian: bless you, don't go into the cellar."

"I have had enough of your cellar," replied

I, "to make me forswear its contents for ever."

"That's lucky," answered she; "for you'd turn all the beer sour. But because you've gone and 'listed in the Coalstreams, there's no reason for your walking about like a chimney-sweeper upon May-day. Why, you'll set all the dogs in Missenden a-barking;—what's more," added she in a whisper, and looking towards the door, "the captain came down last night in his carriage and four, and if you don't make yourself decent before he inspects you, he'll soon pop you into the black hole: though," and here she laughed again, "you look as if you'd lain there all night."

"I have not had the advantage of sleeping upon so soft a pillow as you," answered I; "but if you are only laughing at me because I look unhappy, I fear there is no help for that."

"Well, if you like to go about like a merry andrew, that's your affair," answered she; "but you a'n't sober yet, or you'd look at yourself in the glass, and see the mess they've made of you."

I took her advice, and discovered the cause of her merriment. A huge pair of black mus-

tachios ornamented my upper lip; my mouth was painted with red chalk from ear to ear, like that of a clown; my eye-brows were conducted from their proper curve so as to meet in an angle above my nose, the end of which was dotted with blue and red spots; my hair was powdered with flour, and a long pig-tail was suspended from my coat collar. Little as I was inclined to be jocular, I could scarcely refrain from smiling; so I said, "I am not surprised at your laughter, and only wish the rest of the night's adventure could be as easily blotted out as this; to effect that, my dear," I added, "I require your assistance: unaccustomed to drinking, I was easily surprised last night."

"I know you were," said she; "and I know how: the crimp drugged your liquor. It's not the first time he has played that game in this room, nor you the first poor lad who has been cheated out of his money, and forced to enlist for want of smart."

"Will you not give evidence of this," answered I, "when they take me before a magistrate?—you may save me from destruction. They will believe you, and I will love you all my life as my saviour. Alas! I have nothing

in the world left at present but this accursed shilling : I cannot reward you—I can offer you nothing; but so sweet a face, so kind, so gentle a creature as you are, will not refuse to help a poor fellow, and perhaps save him from death; for I would sooner cut my throat, and thus end my miseries, than join the regiment. Though you have seen me in such company, the day may come when it will be in my power to make you amends : I am not what I seem."

" No," said she quickly, " I can see that in despite of your ugly face. Though I am but a poor girl, I can tell a gentleman from a common person, and, unless I'm much deceived, you are some runaway from Harrow School, or some other place, and have got into a scrape, all for a lark like."

It was of no use to undeceive her, and so I replied that she was not far from the truth, and that it would bring ruin and disgrace upon me if my friends heard of my misfortune.

" Well," replied she, resting on her broom, and displaying in that attitude an arm and figure of rare grace and symmetry, and a beauteous countenance beaming with strange, conflicting sentiments, " if you are a gentleman,

you can behave like one: you can keep a secret."

"That I can," replied I, "to the death; for, during a year, I have learned the most difficult of all tasks—to keep my own."

"Well then," said she, "you must know I can do anything I please with the captain;—but can you really keep a secret?"—and here her sparkling black eyes seemed as if they could penetrate my very soul.

"Upon my word,—by all that is dearest to me, by the hope of your assistance, I swear I will," answered I, taking her small tapering hand, which appeared ill adapted to the rude offices of her condition.

"Well then, I have promised the captain,"—and here she paused, whilst her features, and even her ears, were tinged with blushes;—"I have promised the captain to go up with him to London; he has sworn——"

Forgetting my own miseries, and having before me the fate of Freeman's sister, I interrupted her, saying, "Ah! renounce your project then, my good girl: I am but young, but I have heard enough of this world's wickedness to tell you not to believe oaths such as he has

made you. For God's sake remain where you are! It were better to break stones upon the high-road than purchase splendour at such a price. You are too good, too beautiful, too ——,"—I was going to add, virtuous, but the word stuck in my mouth; and so I added, "too well acquainted with men's deceptive promises to trust to the captain. He will take you with him,—he will clothe you like a princess,—you will have your carriage to ride in,—you will have fine dresses, fine trinkets—anything—everything for a short time; but your life will be as that of the gaudy butterfly, your death full of remorse and wretchedness. I implore you not to follow—your seducer,—forgive me these words, but it is the only return I can make for your assistance."

The girl looked at me with an air of mingled fear and hesitation; a tear glistened in her eye; an ashy paleness overspread her cheeks, and she sighed deeply. Alas! it was the last fruitless struggle of natural virtue against the poisonous canker of vicious temptation.

"I have promised, I have promised," replied she, "and he has sworn never to desert me. Oh! he's too generous, too handsome, to think

of that: and I love him—love him so that if he were to ask my life, I would give it to him. But—no matter; I thank you all the same for your advice: I have made up my mind. But, hark! I hear my mistress coming down. Now mind what I say: I'll tell him you are an old sweetheart of mine when I lived in service at Banbury, and that you followed me here to take me home and marry me, and that I cannot go with him to London if he lets you join the regiment; so you go and clean yourself, and, when I take in his breakfast, I'll answer for it I'll get you off, or my name's not Mary; for, though he loves me dearly, he's very jealous: only mind you swear you are my sweetheart."

"With all my heart," replied I; "but, for God's sake, take a friend's advice,—shun the danger that is before you. If you go to London, you are eternally lost."

The landlady now came in, and soundly rated the kind but deluded girl for not having finished her work, to which she replied, that she begged pardon, but that I was an old acquaintance from Banbury; that I had been drugged and enlisted by the party, and that she would go to the magistrate, and tell the whole truth, for it was a shame the law allowed such goings on.

"And so it is," replied the landlady, "and I'll speak to the captain myself, if the young man wishes to get off."

"I do indeed, ma'am," said I, "for it was neither my intention to drink nor to enlist; and if I had retained my senses, I would have done neither."

"Well, well, don't fret yourself," answered the good-natured hostess; "I've told my husband, that it's scandalous to permit such doings in his house. I'm sure the captain, when he hears it, will give you your liberty without smart. Dear me!" added she, "what a figure they've made of you, and you so handsome a lad!"

I now thought it prudent to leave my new friend and the hostess to their work, and to proceed to my toilet, full of hope that between the efforts of the two women I should recover my liberty.

CHAPTER IX.

In which the green-eyed monster comes to my rescue in the shape of a fine gentleman—Like master like man—I am benighted, meet with a cold heart and a warm couch—My slumbers disturbed by a party of general merchants—The danger of having a favourite dog, and the doleful destiny of a favourite lady—Providence uses me as the humble instrument of preservation to a righteous man.

MANY minutes had not elapsed ere the sergeant and corporal arrived to report to the captain. The former raised his hand with a peculiar twist by way of salutation, and then giving me an encouraging slap upon the back, exclaimed, "I commend your spirit, my boy: I knew by the cock of your eye, you'd parade the king's colours. Reduce me to the ranks, if ever I saw a smarter recruit, not in Egypt or Flanders!"

"Dead sure of the light company, and, if sharp at drill, to be promoted," echoed the corporal, as he lit his pipe with a hot cinder.

"Why he'll be sergeant in less than a year," responded the other, "if he chooses it. But now, my boy, let's be off to the magistrate's, and when you've kissed the book, I'll advance you part of the bounty, and we'll drink long life to his majesty."

"Go before the magistrate!" answered I, "certainly if I must."

"Must!" exclaimed he, "why, as sure as Chelsea, you must, and so double quick."

"If the law obliges me, it is useless to refuse, but I shall tell his worship that I have been trepanned—that you stupified me with laudanum, or some other drug, cheated me of my money, and forced this shilling into my hand without my knowledge. I have not enlisted, and never will with my free consent."

"Blank cartridge!" exclaimed the corporal, puffing forth a whiff of pig-tail. "We know our duty: you took the shilling, and I've witnesses to prove it."

"And I have a witness also," replied I, "one who saw the whole transaction."

"This comes of that broken-down merchant's cant," said the sergeant: "these gentlemen, and their education, give more trouble at the orderly-room than a whole battalion of recruits that can't read or write. But I've billed him up for disobedience of orders, so no more talking in the ranks, but march with me to his worship, unless you can pay smart."

"How can I pay smart," rejoined I, "when I have been tricked out of all my money? besides you said there was no vacancy."

"Vacancy or not," retorted he, "I won't stand with piled arms any longer, so fall in. If you don't, I'll send for the constable."

"I protest, and shall protest," answered I, addressing the hostler and other persons, who had collected round us, "against being thus kidnapped; it's a shameful abuse of the law."

"It is a burning shame, sergeant," exclaimed the hostess, who had approached, "and if you take the young man before his worship, I and Mary will give evidence of what passed last night."

"Halt there, gentlemen and ladies," retorted the recruiter, "you'll just be pleased to mind your own business, and let me settle his majes-

ty's. I know my duty and the Mutiny Act, and unless you choose to down with the smart, I won't let him off, not for all the women in Buckinghamshire."

Seeing it was useless to resist, and trusting to the magistrate's sense of justice, and the testimony of the women, I was about to follow the sergeant, when a smart valet with a figured linen jacket and snow-white dressing-apron, his hair powdered and carefully curled, descended the stairs, saying, "The captain desires me to d—n you all most particularly, and to say, that if you make such an infernal noise in the passage, he'll report you to the regiment, put all the recruits in the black-hole, and leave the house. He has not been able to sleep all night for your confounded rioting, and he's got as bad a head-ache as if he had been at a sham-fight."

"Tell his honour," replied the sergeant, "that it is the young springhalt and the women who are kicking up a dust. He has taken the shilling, and now he refuses to pay smart, or go before the magistrate. So ask his honour what time he wishes to inspect the recruits, and sign the returns."

"Confound the recruits," said the valet, "for dragging us out of London to this out-of-the way place, where one can get nothing comfortable. My bed was as rough as Pall-mall pavement, and the veal cutlets as tough as master's old leathers. I wonder anybody can live in the country."

A bell now rang sharply—three or four heads were extended to the passage to look at the number, and there was a simultaneous cry of "The captain's bell! John, Waiter! Betty, house! Tom Boots! the captain's bell."

"You'll drive him mad, if you make all that clatter," said the valet, quietly taking a pinch of snuff, and offering his box to the sergeant; "and so, if you please, hold your tongues, and I'll answer the bell. By-the-bye, have the hens laid yet? Instead of catterwauling here, send somebody to watch them—we must have our eggs hot and hot. And I say, cook, master swears you've sent him up the billy-goat's tail sopped in blue ruin, instead of lamb's kidneys stewed in champagne. Egad! the sooner the captain returns to Grosvenor-street the better. This cursed recruiting will kill him, and I can't stand it for love or money."

The bell rang again, and he proceeded leisurely to his master's chamber. Ere many minutes, he re-appeared, and said, " Sergeant, the captain wants to see the recruit, who complains about having been enlisted *nolens volens.* And a devilish hard case, as I told the captain. By George! if I was him, I'd give warning in a twinkling." Upon seeing me stand forward, he added, " O! you are the Johnny Raw, are you? What's your name?"

" I will tell that to the captain," replied I, " if he will be good enough to allow me to speak to him."

" Well then, follow me," answered the valet; and so saying, he conducted me to the door, put in his head, and announced me as the young man from Banbury.

Upon being ushered into the apartment, I found the officer at breakfast. It being the first specimen of this class of personages I had ever seen, I seized the opportunity afforded me for examining him, whilst I was awaiting his condescending to lift his eyes from the newspaper he was reading, upon my person. He was a young man of expressive features. His hair was dark and luxuriant. Jet black whis-

kers fringed the side of his face, curling like the clustering tendrils of the vine, or the glossy coating of the Astracan lamb. His hands were peculiarly small, and adorned with several rings. His figure was above the ordinary height: he had a lofty, commanding forehead, with well-arched and finely-pencilled eyebrows, and as he looked up from the list of births and marriages, and fashionable chit-chat, with which he was occupied, his bright eye shone full upon me, with an expression of frankness and good-nature that appeared to denote as much generosity as nobleness of mind. It was a brilliant, intellectual face, that might have served as a study for Titian or Vandyke: and I could scarcely believe that such an exterior could conceal a heart so depraved as to calmly meditate the destruction of the unfortunate girl, who had evidently kept her promise to me.

The soldier's dress was not ill-suited to show off his person, and the character of his features. A scarlet, Grecian calpac, with its light-blue tassel, was perched upon one side of his head. His shirt-collar was open, and displayed a well-turned throat, the whiteness of which was enhanced by its contrast with the dark curls which

met beneath his chin. His person was enveloped in a loose brocade caftan, held together by a shawl girdle: his trousers were of the same materials, and his feet, which rested upon the sofa cushion, were enclosed in a pair of those rich, embroidered boots, that are worn by the higher order of Russian merchants. A coal-black poodle sat watching his movements, and beside him was a long case containing several amber-headed Turkish pipes, the fragrant weed being preserved in an inlaid casket, which stood open upon the table. On casting my eye a little farther, I saw what I thought was a service of dinner-plate, but which, in fact, was a splendid dressing-case, whose richly-chased silver contents were spread upon a table, with a variety of crystal bottles, and ivory-handled instruments, which then seemed better fitted for the laboratory of a surgeon or dentist, than as indispensable paraphernalia of a gentleman's toilet.

Seeing that his master continued to read the paper, or perhaps being envious of his fellow-servant, the poodle, devouring all the boiled fowl, my conductor became impatient, and after stirring the fire, and scraping up the cinders, a

noise to which he knew his master had a peculiar objection, he again said, "Sir, here's the young man from Banbury!"

"Is he a scavenger or dustman, you inveterate booby, that you think it necessary to make that confounded scraping? If ever I catch you at that operation again, I'll pulverise you, and verify the burial-service with your ashes. Here, give me Ali Pacha, with some of Hudson's last Sultanskoi; mix me a glass of lemon sherbet, and let Malek-adel have one of Vance's pills, he's as dyspeptic as a Virginia planter."

This was all incomprehensible to me, but the mystery was explained by the valet taking forth a splendid pipe, its long cherry-wood tube and amber mouth-piece richly ornamented with turquoise, gold, and enamel. He then filled it with Turkish tobacco, presented it to his master, lighted a slip of perfumed paper, and in a few moments the room was obscured with clouds of smoke, differing most agreeably from the filthy vapours I had inhaled the preceding night. The captain now reclined upon the sofa, in all the apparent extasy of an opium-eater—and then, as he shot forth two long streams of vapour from his nostrils, he addressed

his valet, saying, "Tell the sergeant to parade the recruits at twelve, and see they be well washed—I'll sign the returns afterwards. Order four horses at seven o'clock, get the carriage ready in time, and now—eclipse."

As soon as the servant had retired, the soldier rose, and after walking up and down, and making his dog leap over his pipe, he turned to me and said. "So, young fellow, you have come all the way from Banbury to pick up a young wife, and have got married to Brown Bess for your pains."

"I beg your pardon, sir, I am not married to any such person," replied I, not knowing what he meant.

"A left-handed marriage, eh?" said he, smiling, "the old girl kicks, does she? What! you want a divorce already?"

"Indeed, sir, there must be some mistake," replied I.

"O well, then, what the deuce did you send the woman to bother me for? If you have no objection to enlist, get yourself attested as soon as possible: but not in my regiment, sir—why, you are not tall enough for the rear rank."

"I beg pardon, sir, but I do not wish to

enlist in any regiment. I came from Banbury to see Mary. The corporal persuaded——"

"I don't want to know anything about the corporal," said he, interrupting me, "but you may think yourself fortunate in falling into such hands as mine. Take warning from this scrape, young man. You seem innocent of the ways of the world, and are apparently of better education than the generality of your class."

"I have been most shamefully trepanned," replied I, "and it is my belief they have robbed me of what little money I possessed."

"This comes of yielding to temptation," retorted he, "and if I did not like to make people happy, and to defend the virtuous and unfortunate, it would serve you right to insist upon your bearing the consequence of your intemperance and folly. So you want to marry the barmaid, eh? What are your parents or friends?"

"Respectable people, sir," replied I, "who would never pardon me if they knew what folly I had been guilty of."

"And have you their consent, or have you any means of supporting the girl?" demanded he.

"Not at present, sir, but I hope in time," was my answer, and Heaven forgive me for the falsehood.

"Why, she is older than yourself—talk of marrying at your age! This is the way the country is filled with paupers. You vagabond, if I thought you were vicious enough to think of deceiving an innocent young girl, if you are depraved enough to entertain such intentions, I would hold you to your bargain, and have you marched off to the regiment with a black mark against your name."

"I should deserve it, sir," replied I, "if I did harbour such a thought, but that is far from my intention. All I want, with your honour's permission, is to be released from serving, and I will then return from whence I came. I am but young, but I would sooner perish than be guilty of the wickedness you allude to. I am ready to marry Mary to-morrow, if she will consent."

"I will let you off upon condition that you renounce the project," replied he; "it would be the ruin of you both, so ring the bell—here is a one-pound note for you. Mount your cockhorse, and gallop back to Banbury as fast

as you can. For the sake of your poor mother, who, the barmaid says, is a respectable widow, I will take upon myself to settle your business."

I thanked him with all my heart, readily promised to renounce marrying Mary for the present, and in a few seconds more, the sergeant made his appearance, standing near the door with his cap on, but in the erect and respectful attitude of a soldier before his superior. "Sergeant Spikeman," exclaimed the officer, "there has been some foul play about this young man. Take care what you are about, or we shall be reported to the Horse Guards. This is rather a new way of procuring volunteers."

"Respectfully ask your honour's pardon," said the sergeant, touching his cap, "I have been nineteen years in his majesty's service, and may say that I have seen some hundreds forced to enlist by their own consent, just in the same manner. But your honour's commanding officer, and can do as he pleases."

"Thank you for your information," retorted the captain, "therefore, since you give me permission, I shall not allow this lad to go before the magistrates. He will pay his smart, so you

will be no loser, and I shall be none the worse for doing a kind action, and saving a young man from misery. Now, Mr. Banbury, or whatever other name you rejoice in, there is a one-pound note, transfer it to the sergeant, and the sooner you take up your bed and walk, the better."

"Please your honour," said the sergeant, "what I did was for the good of the king's service, and the honour of the Coldstreams."

"The devil it was!" replied the officer. "I cannot see how drugging a poor lad's liquor, cheating him of his money, cramming a shilling into his pocket, and forcing him to enlist against his will, can reflect any credit upon the service."

"When we were in Flanders and Egypt," said the sergeant——

"You learned some confounded foul tricks, Mr. Spikeman, if you imported this system with you. But enough. Parade the other recruits in an hour, and now, Mr. Banbury——"

"Jessop, sir, if you please."

"Well then, Mr. Jessop, beat the general, and evacuate the town forthwith. I shall desire the sergeant to pay for your place upon the coach, and see you off."

I repeated my thanks, made my bow, descended to the bar, tossed the ribbons from my hat to one of the maids, paid the sergeant his twenty shillings, and having thanked Mary for her kind assistance, and again implored her to shun the fatal career into which she was about to launch, I hastened to take leave of poor Freeman, who was now standing in the yard awaiting the inspection.

Being watched by the sergeant, who seemed more distressed at losing my services than pleased at the recovery of the smart-money, I had only time to tell Freeman that I was liberated—that I should proceed as fast as possible to London, where I would seek for him, "and perhaps," said I, "it may be in my power to procure your discharge in a manner you little anticipate. Lady Delphine Toryville owes her life to me, and the only return I will ask for, is your discharge." Freeman asked for an explanation, which I declined giving at the moment; so after telling me I was more fortunate than many other poor lads, who had been entrapped in a similar manner, he returned me a few shillings which he had rescued from my pocket, when I fell under the table, shook me by the hand, and we parted.

In less than ten minutes, the Banbury coach arrived, my place was paid by the captain's orders, and I mounted behind, with the determination of getting down and re-tracing my steps as soon as possible. This opportunity presented itself upon reaching the shabby-looking town of Wendover,—which, notwithstanding its poverty, had the honour, as a gentleman on the outside said, to send two members to parliament, or rather, they sent themselves,—the coachman pulled up at a public-house, and whilst he was delivering a commission to one of the lace-makers, I slipped down from the dickey, hid myself in the garden, and in two or three minutes, I heard the coach drive off.

Upon this I lost no time in entering the tap-room, saying, I had forgotten a valuable parcel at the place whence I came, and towards evening set off upon my return, being resolved to walk all night, in order to avoid being seen by the sergeant or his party. It was late when I again reached Missenden, so that I passed unnoticed through the town. The night was pitchy dark, and the rain fell in torrents. After having walked two or three miles, I reached a small and lonely building near the road-side, where, by the light of

a lantern suspended beneath the porch, I read a few words indicating that beds and refreshments might be procured. My hand was upon the latch, when I heard women's voices within, and recognised that of the Missenden barmaid. Scarcely had I time to conceal myself behind the projecting gable, ere the door opened, and Mary came forth attended by a stout, ill-favoured woman, who held her bundle. The howling winds prevented my hearing what passed between them, but I saw the one sob, and the other laugh—laugh like a demon rejoicing over the fall of a sinner. In a few seconds, a chariot and four approached, at full speed: its lamps showed to me the captain and his poodle inside: it stopped opposite the house—the steps were unfolded; Mary, half eager, half repenting, ran forward and sprang in—the crimson blinds were drawn down, the valet remounted upon the rumble, and away the deluded creature was borne—to be the sport of a few days' caprice, the victim of long years of degradation and remorse.

There are many who would doubtless refuse the slightest degree of sympathy to this unhappy girl. To feel for her as for Freeman's ill-fated

sister, was, it is true, impossible. The latter, innocent and unconscious of guilt, had been sacrificed by one of those plots, which, to the honour of humanity, are of rare occurrence—the other had cast herself headlong into the gulf, with full knowledge of her fault, and without even the extenuating excuse of misery or want. But, notwithstanding this, my heart sank within me when I reflected upon her inevitable destiny. Erring as she was, I commiserated her—I knew that she had been corrupted by promises and temptations which were too well calculated to ensnare a vain and ignorant girl; I knew, also, that before the lustre had passed away from the treacherous gifts with which she had been lured to destruction, her own bloom would be tarnished in the eyes of her companion, and that she would then be cast aside, a miserable object of penury and scorn.

But this was not a fitting time, however, for moralising. I therefore crept from my concealment, rapped at the ale-house door, and was admitted by a decent-looking young woman of eighteen or nineteen, who, upon seeing me, called out, "Mother, here's one of the gentlemen!" Upon this the woman whom I had seen

before immediately came from an inner parlour, and, after eyeing me distrustfully, demanded my business—a singular question, as it struck me, from one of her calling; my answer was brief—"A night's lodging, and something to eat, for which I will pay in advance." She then took the shilling which I held towards her, rang it upon the floor, scrutinised me again with no friendly eye, and said, "You can have refreshments but no bed; so you had better eat a mouthful, and make the best of your way to Amersham."

"I am wet to the skin, and tired," replied I, "for I have walked from Wendover. All I require is to remain until daylight."

"I tell you," retorted she, "you can't have a bed or lodging here; I expect my husband with some dealers from London, who are going down the road to a fair, and there is not accommodation enough for them."

"Let me sleep in the chimney-corner, or upon one of those benches," I replied; "anything, or anywhere, sooner than pass such a night upon the road."

"I'll not let you, or any other tramper, sleep in my kitchen," answered the hostess; "there

are too many thieves and bad characters wandering about, and who knows what you may be?"

"Mother!" said the young girl, "you can surely let the young man sleep in the loft, if he likes. The most he can do is to run away with a truss of hay. It isn't a night to turn out a dog."

"Mind your own business, Molly," retorted the mother; "he sha'n't lodge here, and that's flat." It was in vain that I used all my powers of persuasion, to overcome the woman's objections; she continued inflexible: I therefore dried my clothes at the fire, swallowed a hasty supper, paid my reckoning, and was about to quit the house, when the girl, who accompanied me to the door, touched my arm, pointed to the end of the house, and said in a whisper, "You'll find the loft-ladder round the corner; the door opens with a latch: you may sleep snug enough among the hay and straw, and no one be the wiser, provided you are off before daylight. Perhaps," added she, in a still lower tone of voice, "you may be disturbed by the dealers in the parlour, for they are merry gentlemen. But don't mind that—only take my advice, don't make a noise, unless you want to

bring yourself and me into trouble." Then bidding me a good journey, in a loud voice, she closed the door.

There was a mystery in the words and manner of the girl, that gave me little inclination to profit by the proposition, so I determined to proceed onwards, but the night was so fearfully dark and tempestuous, that I could scarcely retain my footing. I therefore returned, found the ladder, mounted, opened the door, and creeping as far as I could amongst the hay, soon fell into a heavy sleep.

I had not long enjoyed repose, however, ere I was awakened by the sound of men's voices, apparently in loud dispute, immediately beneath me. Remembering what the girl had said, I endeavoured to recompose myself to sleep, but the conversation which reached my ears soon put an end to all further desire to remain under such a roof. I rose, therefore, seized my bundle, put my shoes inside, and endeavoured to feel my way towards the door: as I moved cautiously along with outstretched hands, I perceived a feeble glimmering of light through a chink in the floor. Tempted by curiosity, I knelt down, and carefully removed the litter which concealed the

narrow crevice, and thus obtained a perfect view of the chamber beneath.

The first thing which met my eye, was a table strewed with bottles and glasses, and fragments of a supper, around which sat four or five men, whose dress was that of inferior horse-dealers, but whose language, the greater part of which was incomprehensible to me, proved them to belong, if possible, to a less honest class of traders. Upon the floor lay several rough great-coats, saturated with rain; a brace or two of pistols were deposited upon the mantelpiece, and, in a corner, were half-a-dozen heavy bludgeons, a centre-bit, a bunch of skeleton-keys, and other implements used by housebreakers.

"Come, my jolly pals," roared out one of the party, "it's no use wrangling about the way, the job's to be done. The landlord's right; we must start the spruce if the old nob shows game."*

"You're a set of gallows flats," exclaimed another ruffian, "if you thinks I care whether you scrag him or not. Only I don't see no use

* The slang of the original conversation has been modified, being nearly unintelligible without a glossary. —*Note of Editor.*

in going the red-rig, if we can sack the nibble without his rattling."

"And that you cannot," replied a man, who was evidently the landlord; "old Rightford always snugs the plate and valuables in his bedroom, and he's sure to have the blunt I told you of safe in his desk."

"Who put you up to trap?" demanded one of the gang.

"Why, my daughter Sally, who has been brought up in the family."

"More shame for her to have any hand in such a black business," said the young woman whom I had previously seen, as she removed some empty jugs from the table.

"Hold thy patter, Molly," roared out the landlord, "or I'll lay my whip across thy back."

"You may do that, and worse, father," replied the girl, "but I say Sally deserves to be whipped at the cart's tail for encouraging such goings on."

"Be off with thy cant, wench," retorted the father; "Sally's worth fifty such psalm-singing dips as you; so mizzle, and be d——d to you."

The girl, upon this, withdrew, merely saying as she went, "Father, you'll bring her neck

and your own to the gallows, and all of us to shame, I fear, if you persist in harbouring such bad company."

"Why, old heavy-wet," exclaimed one of the thieves, "Molly would make a rare cad to the quaker lady what goes to comfort the poor kiddies in Newgate; but that's neither here nor there; let us know how the job is to be done, and we'll work it.—It won't be safe for you to have any hand in it. You're too well known; only you just chalk the score and we'll stand the reckoning."

"If," replied the landlord, "you'll listen quietly, I'll soon tell you the time of day." Silence being obtained, the landlord proceeded: "I reckon the business worth fifty pounds apiece, only you can't get at the gravy or the browns without a little trouble, and mayhap, a bit of a skrimmage with the old man, who, though he be a clergyman, is as full of pluck as any young cove in the county."

"Never mind that," said the first speaker, "we'll soon muzzle him."

"Well then, as the waters are out in the meadows, you must keep straight along the lane, round the corner, until you come to a garden

wall on the right hand; there's no other house nor building except the church within half a mile—you can't miss it. When you get there, cross the shrubbery, go round to the stables, and you'll find a ladder over the pump: take it down to the side next to the garden, and get in at the corner window. Sally has promised to leave the shutters unbarred; so that won't stop you. When you're in the passage, you'll see a green door just opposite. That's the old boy's room; and as there's only one man-servant, who sleeps a good way off, you'll only have to deal with the old nob."

"That's enough," said the ruffian who seemed to be the leader, "and the sooner we start, the better. It's past ten now, and we must be back in town afore daylight."

"It's of no use to start before twelve," answered the landlord, "for they won't be a-bed. Besides, I expect Silver Bill every moment: he's to meet Black Ned and the Schoolmaster at Chalfort. They've got to work a flash spice, what I've put them up to, and they'll ride on here after, and eat a crumb of supper."

"Silver Bill be d——d!" exclaimed another of the burglars, "he's one of your crack road coves,

that pretends to come grand over us; he'll only be in the way; and as for the Schoolmaster, I'll not trust him—he's a split. I've got a score to wipe off with him; and as sure as his name's Martin, I'll plant him some of these days."

"Schoolmaster and Martin!" These two words vibrated through my whole frame. I thought it possible that this Martin was the same man whose name I had heard in the Buckingham Infirmary, and that the Schoolmaster was no other than the Thistle-house usher; I listened, therefore, with breathless attention, in the hope of catching some word that might throw further light upon the mystery. But I was disappointed, for the gang, hearing that it would be dangerous to move before midnight, began singing and talking over their exploits, and Martin's name was not again mentioned.

I had heard enough of their night's project to be fully aware of their purpose, and the means by which it was to be carried into effect, and I therefore instantly determined to counteract their operations, and, if possible, to save the property, and perhaps the life, of the gentleman whom they menaced. The description given by the landlord was sufficient to guide me, so I

crept towards the door, opened it, and had my foot upon the ladder, when I heard the clatter of hoofs at full speed, and had scarcely time to draw back, ere a horseman galloped up, dismounted, and led his reeking steed into the stable. I therefore resumed my position over the crevice, still hoping to obtain further intelligence of Martin. When I looked down, the room was in confusion: the thieves were all on foot, excepting the fellow who had menaced the Schoolmaster. He took his pistols from the chimney, slipped them into his pockets, and, placing his feet upon the fire-hob, continued to smoke without turning his head. In an instant more the door opened, and the landlord entered, ushering in a man with huge black whiskers, who bore no resemblance to Nibshort.

"A proper cross, indeed!" exclaimed the host, as he helped the stranger to draw off his wet riding-coat.

"Bad enough, by the Lord Harry," replied the other, filling himself a large glass of brandy, and tossing it off at a gulp. "Why, I'd sooner work the fourteen on the water than join jemmies with such a cowardly snob."

"What's the rig, Ned?" demanded three or four of the gang; "and where's Silver Bill?"

"And where's Martin, and be d——d to him?" asked the fellow by the fire.

"Why, Bill's mizzled back to London to square the beaks, and the Schoolmaster's nabbed."

"What! did the lobster sport a claw?" demanded the landlord.

"No," replied the other; "but his dog did; and so Martin must needs burn powder; and there he lays at Amersham, with a broken thigh and a pair of handcuffs for a tourniquet."

"And sarve him gallows right," said the man by the fire, slapping his hand upon his knee, and rising; "it's a pity he's not been lagged these ten years: but how the devil did he get into quod?"

"Mix me up a stiff glass, hot with, and give me a crumb to eat, landlord, and I'll tell you; but I've not much time, for I must be up in Whitechapel before seven, to meet Will. Martin swore he'd be revenged; and so Bill and I have nothing left for it but to lay snug until we hear more of the matter." A steaming glass of brandy-and-water and some cold chine were now placed before him, and, as he hastily satis-

fied his hunger, he proceeded, " Well, Bill and I trotted quietly down, and met Martin at Chalfort, and, after settling some business with our fence, we placed ourselves, according to Barton's directions, near the corner of the cross-road to Watford. We had not been there many minutes before we heard the rattler coming, but couldn't see inside, as the red blinds were down; so I cantered up to the side of the leaders, pulled up the boy with a stop-knot, whilst Martin tittuped round to the rumble, to take care of the flunky, and Will tapped at the window; up went the blind, down went the glass, and Will, who always behaves like a gentleman, bade the young cove deliver, and, touching his hat to the lady, told her not to be frightened."

" Lady be d——d," said the landlord; " it's only Molly, the barmaid, from Missenden."

At this the gang all laughed, and one of them said, " What! Silver Bill, who always boasts of keeping fine company, not know the difference 'twixt a west-end flash-un and a chaw-bacon blowen: that is a good one!"

" It's no laughing matter, you web-padded bugman; for the poor girl, nor Will, nor I

either, as you shall hear, if you'll stop your chaffing," replied the highwayman, indignantly. "Well," continued he, "all went on right: Bill had sacked the stuff, and was just asking for the lobster's card, that he might send him back the lady's picture out of his snuff-box, when up rides Martin, and, seeing a gold chain that Will had forgotten, what does he do but crams in his arm to snatch it; upon which, up springs the cursed poodle, seizes him by the mask, tears it off, and, as the devil would have it, the blowen hallooed out, "I know him, I know him: it's Martin!" Upon this, I saw a flash, heard a groan, and back she fell: Martin had shot her right through the heart."

"She won't split, at any rate," said the landlord: "that's the time of day."

"Was it?" retorted the other; "d—n it, Barton, you're as bad every inch as the Schoolmaster; but he's got well sarved for his cowardly tricks, for Bill hit him a topper over the head with the butt of his barker, dropped him like a stone in the road, and then, hallooing to the boys, told them to drive on as if the devil was at their heels: as soon as they were gone, he and I jumped off our prads to look

after Martin, who lay in the road groaning and swearing."

"Why, what was the seedy flat snivelling about?" asked one of the men.

"Why, the hind wheel had trundled over his leg, and broke it like a match, that's all," replied Black Ned. "But Bill, who is not the man to see a friend stuck up, tried to lift him on his horse, and carry him to the fence's, at Chalfort; but Martin, like a ruffianly coward, put his hand into his breast-pocket, pulled out a small barker, and fired it right into Bill's body; luckily for him, the ball only grazed his ribs; so he dropped the Schoolmaster in the mud, jumped on his prad, and started for the surgeon's at Watford; and, as I saw the lamps of the London mail hammering down, I hopped into my saddle, stuck spurs into the old girl, and came on here just to put the landlord up to trap, and take a bite before I start back."

"Did you speak to the Schoolmaster about our job?" demanded one of the housebreakers.

"No, you snob," replied the highwayman; "I'm not the cove to chaff about other men's larks: and, as for Martin, I never trusted him, and often told Bill he'd get lagged for keeping such company."

"And so he will," exclaimed the ruffian near the fire. "D—n the fellow, he has got his deserts, and if he's topped, so much the better: it may save more necks than his own."

"I must look to mine, however," observed Black Ned; "so, landlord, give old Kate a quart of hot ale, and she'll carry me into Whitechapel before two hours."

The landlord now quitted the room to attend to the highwayman's horse, and the rest of the party united in sympathising with Will and his companion: none pitied the murderer; even one or two expressed regret at the untimely fate of the unfortunate girl, whose wretched career had been thus miserably terminated. In a few minutes more, Ned changed hats and coats with one of the gang, shook hands with three or four others, tossed off another glass of brandy, led out his mare, lightened her girths, patted her neck, threw himself into the saddle, and started off at full speed upon the London road.

CHAPTER X.

council of war is held, which terminates in a miraculous draught — Some description of my own person, showing the advantage of a comely exterior —Virtue and vice personified in two persons of humble station—I am deeply moved by the christian charity of a worthy divine, and resolve to confide my story to him.

Fearing if I did not quickly execute the plan I had in view, that the robbers might arrive at Mr. Rightford's before me, I again crawled to the door, descended the ladder, and, in a few seconds, found myself in the lane conducting to the clergyman's abode. After running about twenty minutes, I reached the garden-wall, and perceived lights still issuing from the windows. I now paused a few seconds to take breath and collect myself; then, opening the gate that led into the shrubberies, I hastened to the front-

door, and rang sharply at the bell. I had to repeat this operation two or three times before any notice was taken. At length, footsteps approached, and a man's voice demanded, "Who's there?" I replied, "A messenger from Missenden upon urgent business to Mr. Rightford." The person, whoever it was, retired; but returned quickly: the door was unbarred, and I was admitted.

"I beg pardon, sir," said I, addressing a venerable-looking but not aged man, "are you the Reverend Mr. Rightford?"

"I am," answered he; "pray what business can you have with me at this late hour of the night: is there any one who stands in need of my ministry?"

"I will tell you, sir, if you will permit me to speak to you alone."

"Alone!" retorted he. "Young man, your appearance at this hour of the night, as well as your request, are suspicious: if you have any letter, give it; if any communication, make it at once."

"I entreat you, sir," replied I, "not to entertain unjust suspicions: the safety of your property, and life, perhaps, depends upon it."

"I have little property to lose," rejoined he; "and as for my life, I never injured any man, and have not an enemy upon earth."

"Time," sir, answered I, "is precious; I therefore again implore you to grant my request: from me, you can have nothing to fear, though I have much to dread from others."

"Well, then, come to my study, and do you, boys," added he, turning to two fine young men, "follow to the door. And yet, why these precautions?—the youth does not look like one who harbours any evil intent." He now led the way through a small passage, and conducted me into a neatly-furnished library, and closed the door; then, placing himself near the fire, and fixing me with a steady gaze, he bade me speak.

"Sir," said I, "I am an unfortunate foot traveller overtaken by the storm——"

"This is a novel way of procuring shelter," exclaimed he, smiling, "and justifies my suspicions."

"They are wrong, sir: though unfortunate, I am no beggar. My object is to render you an important service. I was on my road from Aylesbury to London, when I sought a night's

lodging at the lone ale-house, near the end of the lane ——"

"Kept by very honest people, whose daughter, as good a girl as any in the parish, is in my service."

"You are deceived, sir: the house is a receptacle for robbers, and the woman is in league with them."

"Impossible!" answered he: "I would trust her with untold gold."

"A moment's patience, sir, and I will prove the truth of my assertion." I then succinctly narrated the scene I had witnessed from the loft, and added, "If you find my information false, you may deal with me as an impostor."

The worthy clergyman listened to my rapid tale with attention, and, when I had done, lifted up his hands, and said, "I thank almighty Providence for thus watching over me and mine! Such base ingratitude from those who have received so many benefits at my hands was not to be expected. But God's will be done. I thank you, young man, from the bottom of my heart: your conduct shall not go unrequited." Then, touching the bell, the two young men entered, and he repeated to them the substance

of my communication, adding, "It is now past eleven, we must take instant measures for frustrating the projects of the gang. Although I have hitherto thought there was nothing in my house to tempt robbers, and have felt so secure in the good-will of the parishioners, that I would have slept with door and windows open, I see that there is no security against vice and ingratitude. That of Sally and her father afflicts me more than the danger from which, through the providential interference of this youth, we have, I trust, escaped."

"Sir," said one of the young men, "pray forgive me, but there is no time for moralising. My cousin and I have our guns, the gardener has his blunderbuss, and old Thomas can arm himself with the battle-axe, which hangs with the old armour in the hall: you must remain in reserve. I am a soldier, and must therefore take the garrison under my command: I warrant you we'll give the rogues a warm reception."

"And I, being a lawyer," said the other young man, "beg to suggest, as a measure of precaution, that we lock the witness up in one room, and secure the baggage, Sally, in another,

and then confront them in the morning, after which, we will lay an information against mine host of the Pear Tree: you, uncle, remain quietly here, and we will render a good account of the villains."

"I think," replied the old gentleman, "it will be sufficient to make fast the windows, to secure the stable ladder, and thus prevent the possibility of their accomplishing their purpose. I will have no blood shed. As for this poor lad, I will look to him myself; and it will be more prudent merely to watch Sally, and not to betray the source of our information, or it may bring down the vengeance of the gang upon our informant. These things had better be done quietly. In the morning, I will discharge the ungrateful girl, and consult with the magistrates about her father."

"If you will consent," observed the young lawyer, "I have thought of a plan by which we may catch one or two of the rascals in *flagrante delicto*. Suppose that we leave the ladder and window as if we were ignorant of the girl's treachery and the intended attack. Edwin and the rest of us will secrete ourselves well-armed in the room, spring upon the first man who

puts his foot inside, and secure him. I know the character of these villains: upon the first alarm, they will fly, and abandon their companion, and we can effect this without the slightest risk to ourselves, or without an exchange of blows."

"Capital, capital, cousin!" exclaimed the soldier; "you deserve to be commandant of the Bow Street runners. Let us lose no time, but muster our forces."

After some discussion, Mr. Rightford consented to this proposition, upon condition that he should be present to share in the adventure, and moderate the impetuosity of the young men. The latter then withdrew, and the former, turning to me, said, "I cannot suppose that you have any object in deceiving us. However much appearances may be against you, your language and manner are those of a person of good education and respectability. You stated that you were unfortunate: I will hear what you have to say in the morning, and, if it is within my humble power to render you assistance, you may rely upon me." I thanked him, and declared that my only object was to do a good action, and that, if he would trust me,

I would willingly join him and his family in defending the house. Upon this, he opened the drawer of a cabinet, took forth a pair of pistols, which, he observed, had not seen the light since his brother's death, loaded them, and, placing one in my hand, told me he should put my sincerity to the test.

The clock now nearly pointed to the hour appointed by the landlord. In a few minutes the soldier returned, and said that he had posted his cousin, with the gardener and footman, in the apartment, the corner windows and the shutters of which they had found unfastened: that they had visited and secured all the other parts of the house, and that the faithless Sally was asleep, or pretended so to be, in the room with the other female servants. The lights were then extinguished, and Mr. Rightford, bidding me follow him, proceeded with his son to join the rest of the party, who stationed themselves in the most convenient manner for the execution of their plan.

It was a night well suited for the purpose of the robbers. The wind, which had hitherto blown in heavy squalls, now increased to a hurricane, and crashing with a fearful din

through the leafless branches of the trees. The rain pattered violently against the windows: so that it was almost impossible for any one within the house to hear other noises without, save those of the jarring elements. The hall clock had long struck twelve: the quarter, the half-hour, had sounded: every moment seemed an age, as we crouched down in breathless anxiety, expecting our prey. So silent were we, that the very beating of our hearts would have been audible, had not the wind's roar drowned the sound. Another quarter passed, and I began to fear the burglars had renounced their project, and that I should be accused of inventing the whole story, in order to obtain access to the house. Indeed, one of the young men intimated as much in a whisper, adding, that if I had deceived them, they would give me a sound horse-whipping, and then have me committed as a vagabond and thief. The burring, whizzing noise of the clock, which precedes that of its striking the hour, had commenced, and the young lawyer had just observed to his uncle, that it was almost useless to wait any longer, when the soldier, who stood watching through the crevice of the shutter, retreated one or two

paces, saying, " Hush ! hush ! there they are ; I see and hear them—are you all ready ?" Each of us grasped his weapon more firmly, and answered affirmatively.

In a few seconds, the sound of something falling against the outer wall was audible : the sash was cautiously lifted, and the shutter gently pushed back. A partial streak of light upon the horizon showed the head and shoulders of a man, with his hands resting upon the window-sill. He paused, stooped, and spoke to some one behind. In a moment more, he raised himself still higher, and leaned forward, as if listening : a leg was then passed into the room, then another, then a whole body. He then turned round, looked out, and said, in a low tone, to his associates, " All's right—come on," and another head appeared upon the top of the ladder. At this moment, Mr. Rightford drew a dark lantern from beneath his coat, and threw the light suddenly towards the window—the young soldier called out, " Now for it !" he then darted forward, whilst the gardener, an athletic man, sprang upon the astounded burglar, and, with a large hand-net, which he held prepared, enveloped him, as with an extinguisher,

and dragged him towards the door. The lawyer and I simultaneously rushed to the window, to seize the second thief; but he broke from our grasp, and sprang down. A pistol was fired from without—the ball struck harmlessly in the ceiling; we discharged ours—there were curses, and exclamations of pain beneath. Then we heard the sound of feet hastening down the shrubbery; this was followed by the rattling of a cart at full speed: it was evident the robbers had taken to flight.

The window was now closed, the shutters fastened, the door locked, and the party descended to the library, when the prisoner was extracted like a huge fish from the net. In an instant, I recognised the leader of the gang, who, twinkling his eyes, and gazing around him with an air of mixed effrontery and astonishment at his capture, exclaimed, "D——n me if I'm not properly queered! as sure as Newgate drop, we've been sold by that humbugging blowen; but if I don't sarve her out for it, I'll be topped. So, gentlemen, if you'll squirt in a good word for me with the nobs, I'll put you up to the whole rig."

"We can promise nothing," said Mr. Rightford; "but what do you mean by being sold?"

"Why, there's a girl in your house, is there not, daughter to that old rascal, the landlord of the Pear Tree?"

"There is."

"Well, then, she settled the smash with old heavy wet, and we met at his house, and be d——d to it, to work the job." Then, to my great satisfaction, he corroborated all I had said, without, however, betraying any of his associates except the landlord: and, when he had given proofs of Sally's and her father's complicity, he added, "Now, as I've slapped you up to the mark, and done a good turn, perhaps, to the neighbourhood, I hope you'll behave like a gentleman, and let me mizzle. It won't do you any good to get me lagged, and, mayhap, in future, you'll take care and shut your shutters."

"It would have been better for you if we had," rejoined the lawyer. "We will see hereafter what is to be done in mitigation, that is, if you are willing to come forward before the magistrates as an approver against Sally and her father."

"To be sure I will," replied he; "I'll show them what it is to turn split and sell us to the beaks."

"In the meantime, fast find, fast bind," said the lawyer; "so, my hearty, you must submit to the consequences of your failure."

Upon this, the servants pinioned his arms and legs, and conveyed him to the coal-cellar, when, seeing it was useless to resist, he met his misfortunes gaily, and laughing, exclaimed, he should have preferred the beer-cellar, as he heard his reverence had a good tap: and then, asking for a drop of something to keep out the cold, he began chaunting,

"Then next we waddles up Newgate stairs,
Where the clouts and muffles them hangs in pairs,
So, landlord, tip us a pint of good gin,
As we may sport gallows as we goes in;" (*bis.*)

and the door was closed upon him for the night.

As soon as the captors reappeared, they proceeded to examine the outside of the premises, leaving me with Mr. Rightford, who warmly thanked me for the service I had rendered his family; then, asking me many questions, expressed surprise that a youth of my education and appearance should be compelled to traverse the

country like a common vagrant, and terminated by saying, that if I were honest, which he could not doubt, after the recent proofs I had given of my good intentions, he would aid me in prosecuting my journey. To all this, I replied, that I was very sensible of his goodness, and if he would permit me to take shelter for the night in his house, and listen to me on the following day, I would endeavour to account satisfactorily for my equivocal situation. He readily assented to this, and, moreover, assured me, that whatever I communicated to him should be held sacred.

The young men now re-entered, bringing with them a sack, marked with the landlord's name, and filled with house-breaker's tools, which had been left in the shrubbery. They had discovered traces of blood also beneath the window, and had tracked it into the lane, where, from the marks of feet and clotted gore, it was evident the wounded man had been lifted into the cart. Refreshments were then produced, and after Mr. Rightford had offered up a short but fervent prayer of thanksgiving for the providential escape of himself and family, I was given in charge to the footman, who conducted me to a comfortable chamber, where I found

a bed such as I had never slept upon in my life-time.

Overwhelmed even as I was with fatigue, I could not sleep, but lay thinking of my wretched destiny, and regretting more than ever my folly in running away from Thistle-house, and thus plunging myself into a labyrinth of troubles, and degrading myself to a state of abandonment, the most pitiful to which a poor creature could be reduced. Nearly a year had elapsed since I had been exposed to a life of vagrancy. During that time, with every sentiment of virtue and truth in my heart, I had been driven to repeated acts of deception, if not of crime, brightened, however, by the reflection that I had saved the life of my friend's sister, that I had committed no heinous offence against the laws, and that, within the last few hours, I had been instrumental in frustrating a vile plot, which might have ended in the murder of the good man in whose abode I had found shelter. But my heart sickened when I considered the dreary future; I trembled when I remembered that, with only a few shillings in my pocket, I was about to proceed to London, — to that mighty vortex of splendour, misery, and wanton

dissoluteness, where so many thousands daily languish for a mouthful of that bread, the price of which is heedlessly squandered by the wealthy in acts of profligacy and dissipation; where mediocrity entails seclusion, and where poverty is a crime-engendering curse—a source of degradation, not of sympathy,—where those, whom fortune has elevated above the stings of want, discredit the existence of human misery amidst the fumes of their own rich banquets and those costly hangings that veil the starving wanderer from their view. I had no friends, no acquaintances in the mighty city: my sole reliance was upon an instrument on which hundreds were superior in execution to myself, and were it not so, I recollected the words of the good bishop at Farnham, and felt that without a protector or friend, my prospect of success would be most precarious. Behind me, all was wretchedness—before me, not a single cheering ray. I dreaded to advance,— I trembled to recede; nevertheless, I longed to throw myself upon the mercy of those who had rescued me from the workhouse, and promised to provide for me in India. If it were possible to obtain this appointment, my condition would indeed

be enviable, and, notwithstanding my dread of exposure, perhaps conviction, I made up my mind, upon reaching London, to seek for my anonymous guardian and Lord Eaglehurst, and to face all the perils of a trial for the supposed robbery at Thistle-house.

Day had not long dawned when the servant aroused me, saying that the constables had arrived to carry off the robber to jail, and that intelligence had been received of a shocking murder, committed by some highwaymen upon a poor girl, who was being carried off from Missenden by an officer of the Guards. Upon this, I eagerly demanded if any of the murderers had been arrested, a question which he answered negatively. This appeared extraordinary, since, according to Black Ned's report, Martin had been left on the road, and had fallen into the hands of justice. Being desirous to appear before Mr. Rightford in as respectable a manner as my scanty wardrobe would permit, I took as much pains as possible with my toilet, and, by dint of the footman's assistance, which I purchased by sacrificing one of my precious shillings, I contrived to assume a far different aspect from that of the preceding

night. This was not a moment for any display of personal vanity; but I had learned enough of human nature to know the effect produced by a pleasing exterior. I had so often heard allusions to my gentlemanly appearance by persons of all classes, that I could not help casting an eye at myself in the looking-glass, and thinking, notwithstanding my previous day's fatigue and want of sleep, that my face and figure might justify the predilection of much more fastidious personages than Mrs. Rupert or the Aylesbury star. I do not think I have touched upon this subject before; I shall, therefore, pause for a moment to describe my person, as much in justification of the above ladies, as of others who may appear hereafter.

This is perhaps the more excusable, since there is no country in the world where greater importance seems to be attached to external qualifications than in Great Britain. As a proof of this, let the name of any individual, no matter what his rank or calling, be mentioned in the presence of Englishwomen, and, if unknown to those present, the first inevitable question will be, "Is he handsome?—is he good-looking?" as if masculine beauty were a

matter of rare occurrence in the British Islands, or, at all events, an indispensable passport to society;—whereas in France and Germany, the first question that is asked upon similar occasions, is, "Is he agreeable?—is he clever?"—whence one may draw a reasonable conclusion, that, whilst the fair sex on the continent attach some importance to those mental qualifications, so necessary to the charms of society, the island daughters place greater value upon superficial endowments, which are of little value to any but their possessor, and which, unfortunately, are too often accorded by Nature as a feeble compensation for the absence of more solid qualities.

The well-known remark of the celebrated Wilks, the ugliest man of his epoch, goes to corroborate a part of these observations. In discussing the tendency of his countrywomen to be captivated, at first sight, by outward appearances, he added, "Notwithstanding that Providence has been so singularly avaricious to me of external gifts, and although I might put in a just claim for the *detur tetriori*, I place such confidence in the superiority of the intellectual powers over those of the person that,

if I am allowed a few hours' advance, I will engage to obtain such hold upon a woman's affections, that the handsomest man breathing shall not supplant me." Thus, whilst he acknowledged the immediate effects produced upon the fair sex by external advantages, and admitted his own physical imperfections, he paid a just homage to those mental talents and qualifications which, it is true, require some developement to produce effect; but when allowed a fair field for action, rapidly elevate the ill-favoured to a level with the most comely, and, casting a veil over personal defects, fascinate the soul, and secure a much more lasting victory over the heart than those ephemeral endowments which are at the mercy of time or accident, and whose mere temporary lustre is doomed to fade in a corresponding ratio with the improvement and expansion of the intellectual and more noble faculties.

But to return to my own person. My hair was peculiarly luxuriant and curled naturally, and with increasing years had assumed a darker tint; my eyes were fully orbed, of a clear deep blue, and fringed with those long silken lashes that seem to denote feeling as well as intellect.

My brows were well arched, and finely pencilled: my nose was straight, and almost Grecian. My mouth and ears small and well-turned, and my teeth amply deserved the encomiums passed upon them by my former master the conjuror. Up to that period, I had never worn a well-made boot or shoe, but had my feet been permitted a fair chance, they would not have passed unremarked in a drawing-room. My height was not superior to that of the generality of youths at my time of life, but the hardy exercises and agile feats to which I had been accustomed from infancy, had given an air of firmness and freedom to my limbs and movements not often to be met with at a period of existence, when nature is working one of her greatest revolutions in the human frame. In short, I might be set down as decidedly handsome, at least by all those who do not consider dark hair and black eyes as the standard of human perfection.

My good looks were destined not to pass unnoticed. As I was about to descend the staircase, the old housekeeper, who, like most of her class, was not well pleased to hear that I had been permitted to occupy one of the best

spare beds, entered the apartment. Haunted by the dread of robbers and assassins, and not being satisfied that I was not a thief in disguise, she had evidently come to see if I had carried off any of the linen, or other portable articles with which the room was abundantly provided. Upon casting her eye around, and seeing all safe, and that I had carefully replaced everything in order, and even made up the bed, I heard her whisper to the footman, "Ahah! I'm sure he has been respectably brought up: he's a very nice young man, and don't throw and litter the things about as some of the gentlefolks do: he's quite genteel in his appearance, and nearly as handsome as Master Edwin. I'll make him a nice cup of tea." This was of good augury, and no mean compliment, the young soldier being one of the handsomest youths I had ever seen.

On being ushered into Mr. Rightford's library, both he and his family appeared struck with the change in my exterior. They all shook me by the hand, and turning to two gentlemen, who, I found, were neighbouring magistrates, presented me as the youth through whose generous devotion the scheme of the robbers had been

frustrated. The burglar having been sent off to Aylesbury, the magistrates asked me for my deposition, and when I had given it, with all the oral details I had collected respecting the highway robbery and murder, they desired me to affix my signature. Upon which I hesitated, frankly stating that I had motives for concealing my real name, and that I was unwilling to sign that which circumstances had compelled me to assume. The persons present having vainly endeavoured to overcome my scruples, the difficulty was set aside by their all attesting the deposition, and by their declaring that I would appear at the assizes to give evidence against the prisoner, or any other of his accomplices who might be apprehended. These matters were scarcely terminated, ere a constable arrived and announced that he and a party had been to the Pear Tree, but were unable to find the landlord. They had, however, apprehended the wife and younger daughter, and searched the premises, without discovering any other evidence of complicity, than two or three sacks similar to that left by the burglars. The two women, as well as their faithless relation, were then ordered to be introduced, and I was desired to secrete myself behind a screen near the door.

The mother walked in with an air of sullen boldness, and casting a look of assurance round her, appeared prepared to face the danger with firmness and effrontery. But the features of the girl I had seen the night before expressed intense moral suffering: she held down her head, and folded her hands, which she raised every now and then, and moved her lips as if engaged in inward prayer; she seemed overwhelmed with agony at her situation; and as she ever and anon cast stolen glances at her guilty companions, she looked with an intensity of sorrow, that gave an admirable expression of innocence and benignity to her countenance. The third, the treacherous Sally, buried her face in her hands, sobbed bitterly, and trembled from head to foot, in a paroxysm of shame and terror. After a short pause, Mr. Rightford, who seemed deeply affected at the sight of a family upon whom he had conferred so many benefits, and who balanced between the inclination of his generous and charitable heart to forgive injuries, and the duty he owed to society, thus addressed the mother:

"Mrs. Barton, I most sincerely deplore the unhappy situation into which your husband has

reduced his family. I will not aggravate your misery by alluding to his ingratitude, or to that of your unfortunate daughter."

"Not mine, not mine," exclaimed the younger girl; "I have prayed night and morning, as you taught me, sir, to be kept in the path of righteousness. I never injured any being, and would die to serve you and yours. You brought me up, you fed, clothed, and taught me to read the word of God, and may he bless you for it! I am innocent, indeed I am."

"I believe you, my good girl," replied the clergyman. "The character given of you by your master and mistress, and the expressions made use of by you last night, convince me that you are incapable of an unworthy action. Do not be alarmed: you stand here, not as a culprit, but as a witness."

"A witness!" exclaimed she, lifting up her streaming eyes and hands—"a witness, sir! against my own flesh and blood! O Mr. Rightford! O gentlemen! you cannot expect a child to bear witness against her parents!" and she buried her face in her hands.

"You have a duty, young woman, to perform," observed one of the magistrates, "both o your parents and the laws."

"The law be hanged," said the mother.

"I fear, Mrs. Barton," answered another gentleman, "that will be your husband's fate, and perhaps yours, unless you amend your conduct. We have proofs of Barton's being an accessary before the fact. We have the confession of the prisoner."

"He's a liar that says so," replied the woman; "neither I nor any of us had any hand in it. It's all a story got up by that sneaking villain, White-cross Sam!"

"You know him then?" demanded the young lawyer.

"It isn't fair for a dozen lawyer-people to be down upon a poor woman. You'd be enough to make an angel appear as black as Kendal coal o' this fashion," replied she, evading the question.

"You will have much trouble to white-wash yourself from the effect of keeping such company as that of Black Ned and his associates. And how came you to assist the unfortunate barmaid to run away, Mrs. Barton?"

"Me assist Mary to go off with the captain! Me, gentlemen!" exclaimed the woman, with mingled astonishment and alarm.

"Yes, Mrs. Barton: the less you say upon the subject the better. You see we know more of the affair than you are aware of."

"I don't care what you know," retorted she, recovering herself. "We had no hand in it. If murder was committed up by Chalfort, is that any reason for vexing us with such dark jobs at the Pear Tree? This is another of Sam's rigs, but he shall swing for it."

"You will not deny that the burglars met at your house," said the first magistrate, "or that this sack is your husband's property?"

"The sack may belong to my husband," replied she, "but it's one that was stolen, I'm ready to take oath."

"Pause, Mrs. Barton," said the magistrate, "ere you add perjury to guilt. We have other evidence of your husband's complicity that you little dream of."

The landlady turned round to her youngest daughter, looked at her with a fierce and savage air, and in despite of the gentlemen's presence, struck her a violent blow, saying, "Take that, you ungrateful, psalm-singing split! I wish thy mother's milk had throttled thee."

The poor girl bore the blow patiently, and

saying, "God forgive thee, mother!" wept bitterly. Upon which, Mr. Rightford extended his hand, and led her to the other side of the room, bade her sit down, and told the unfeeling parent, that she accused her daughter most wrongfully.

"Then there is no other person under the sun that put foot in our house last night," exclaimed she.

"We shall see that," answered Mr. Rightford. Then addressing the other girl, he proceeded: "As for you, Sarah Barton, my heart is overwhelmed with anguish when I think that, had it not been for the interposition of Divine Providence, you would, last night, have been an accessary to robbery and murder, perpetrated through your agency upon those who, for years, have nourished and protected you—those who have pardoned your faults, recompensed your services, and endeavoured to instil honest and virtuous principles into your heart. Your conduct is beyond all expression wicked and ungrateful. It merits severe chastisement. But, thank God, you have been spared the remorse of participating in a frightful crime, though not that of having betrayed your benefactor. O

how you are fallen ! Such is the consequence of hypocrisy and vice. But enough: I will not pursue the matter further, so no more. To turn you upon the world without a character, without the means of gaining your bread honestly, would be to drive you to destruction, to additional crime. I shall procure you a means of refuge in an asylum where you will have leisure to consider the enormity of your fault, and, in due time, you may recover your lost character, and again find honest employment, if you conduct yourself to the satisfaction of your superintendents. I forgive you, and may your own conscience be equally lenient."

The girl, who had sobbed and groaned piteously during this address, now raised her head, and advancing towards the benevolent clergyman, threw herself before him, and embraced his knees; he raised her up and said, "Such an attitude of humility is only due to your Maker, that Almighty power, who, if you repent and live virtuously, will pardon your errors, and extend His mercy towards you. Offer up your thanksgiving to him, and not to me, who am but a feeble creature like yourself. As for you, Mrs. Barton, if you and your hus-

band had attended oftener at the parish church, you would have heard such lessons as might have, perhaps, deterred you from keeping that evil company which has brought disgrace and misery upon your family."

"I never missed going to the meeting-house on Sunday evenings," replied the landlady, petulantly, "and there's no law against that. We've paid tithes and dues, and you've no right to ask more."

"True, Mrs. Barton, nor have I ever attempted to place the slightest restraint upon the consciences of my parishioners. Those that honestly and sincerely dissent in principle and conviction from the church of which I am an humble minister, do not appear the less worthy in my eyes. I wish that all were sheep of my flock, but do not bear them ill-will for selecting another pastor, or adopting another form of worship. Up to the present moment, I regretted your absence from divine service, but never doubted your honesty or sincerity: and, as for tithes and dues, I have thankfully received those that have been offered, but never persecuted or complained of those that are unacquitted. But this is no time for such a conversation. We

have conclusive testimony of the robbers having assembled at your house, and of their having received instructions how to act from your husband. The burglar has confessed, and a third person, whom it is unnecessary to produce at present, was an eye-witness of what passed in your parlour last night. Your eldest daughter does not attempt to deny her complicity. Take then my advice:—remain silent. It is not my desire to send you to prison. I will not hold you responsible for the guilt of your husband. Out of consideration to your youngest daughter, I will now, with the magistrates' permission, beg you to return home, and make arrangements for quitting this part of the country, where, you must be aware, you will henceforth be an object of suspicion and distrust."

"And where she can no longer be permitted to keep a receptacle for those gangs of murderers and robbers whose crimes have spread dismay through the neighbourhood," added one of the magistrates. "We shall feel it our duty to rescind the licence, and take other measures for breaking up the nest of villains; therefore the sooner she removes from the Pear Tree, the better."

The woman, who seemed little touched by this announcement, quietly said, " Thank your worships;" and then withdrew.

The elder daughter was desired to retire with one of the servants, and a constable was directed to attend the younger to the ale-house, to protect her from ill-usage, and to assist her in returning, without loss of time, to the family where she was in service. The magistrates then took their leave, and I was left with the clergyman and his son.

The important business of the morning had delayed, until now, the performance of a duty never neglected in Mr. Rightford's household. The servant was therefore desired to summon the family to prayers. When they were congregated, and we were all upon our knees, the good pastor read a prayer for the day, and in brief, but touching words, offered up thanksgiving for the protection that had been accorded to him in the previous night. He humbly invoked pardon and repentance for those who had rendered him evil for good, and then exhorting his auditors to shun profligate company, the first source of man's errors, he raised his voice in a still more solemn manner, and allud-

ing to me, added, "May the Father of all goodness reward the actions of the just! May He shower down his mercies upon the friendless and wanderer, and shield the inexperienced from the dangers which beset their path. Unite with me, my children, in praying that the blessing of the Almighty may be especially directed towards him who appeared in the night season to rescue us, even as the angel delivered the apostle Paul from the fangs of the wicked."

We then rose, and I heard the housekeeper, as she passed her worthy master, whisper, "And a nice young man too, sir; he made his own bed, and put the towels straight across the horse, just as well and better than the housemaid; I wish all the gentlefolk would do likewise."

Mr. Rightford and his few auditors having quitted the library, he told me, that, as soon as I had breakfasted he should be ready to hear my story, and to fulfil his promise of assisting me upon my road to London.

To my shame be it said, this was the first time since quitting Thistle-house, except once in the Buckingham Infirmary, that I had attended anything in the form of divine worship.

I was, therefore, deeply moved, not only with the words of the clergyman, but with his benevolence and forbearance towards the culprits. I thought if ever I could venture to confide my true history to any human being, it would be to him. I imagined, that, if he could exhibit so much charity and indulgence to those of whose culpability and ingratitude he had received such flagrant proofs, that he would not refuse commiseration and succour to one who had rendered him such signal service. I therefore determined to conceal nothing from him, and to trust to his discretion and advice. Having made this resolve, my heart felt lighter: a secret boding told me that Providence had employed me as the humble instrument of salvation to this good servant, in order that he, in his turn, might assist in relieving me from the career of misery and abandonment into which I had fallen. A gleam of hope radiated through my heart, and when the housekeeper summoned me to breakfast, I replied to her question, "Is your tea to your liking, my dear?" by swallowing three large cups, and devouring such a quantity of fragrant butter, delicious white bread, and cold meat, that it somewhat diminished the good

feeling she had evinced towards me: for I heard her whisper to the footman, "Lauk a mercy, John! why he won't leave any beef to make bubble and squeak for the family."

"Yes," replied the other, "he's been out o' place a long time, I doubt. It would be a sight cheaper for master to keep him a week than a fortnight."

CHAPTER XI.

A short but grave chapter, better suited to bishops than boudoirs—Showing what many pastors are, and what all should be; proving likewise the value of a name.

In a short time I was summoned to Mr. Rightford's study, and, whilst he was engaged in finishing a letter, I had leisure to examine both his person and the apartment. He was then, perhaps, in his sixtieth year, his figure was tall, erect, and well-proportioned. His features, which still bore the traces of great beauty, beamed with intelligence and benignity, yet there was in the expression of his face an air of mingled melancholy and philosophy, which told that he had not travelled through the valley of life without meeting with some of those

shocks that tend to cast a gloom over the heart, and to inspire one with resignation, and a contempt for the world's vanities.

His voice was full and harmonious: and though I have since heard many eminent preachers, none excelled him in purity of accent, or in flexibility and imposing solemnity of intonation.

The chamber in which I was seated was worthy of its master. With the exception of the chimney, over which hung the portrait of a lady, who bore great resemblance to the young soldier, the sides were occupied with books, which, from the painted tablets above them, seemed arranged, not as they are, by-the-bye, in the British Museum, pell mell, according to the authors' names, but each after its distinct classification.

A broad and useful library table of carved oak stood in the centre, upon which, besides every implement necessary for writing, were the Quarterly and Edinburgh Reviews, with other periodicals of minor influence.

In short, the apartment contained everything that could contribute to essential comfort, without exaggerated luxury, and showed that its

proprietor was not only a man of learning and taste, but possessing an easy and independent existence.

Ere I proceed, I may as well say a word or two respecting this excellent divine. I can do so with less reluctance, since, alas! these pages cannot meet his eye. He is already gathered to his fathers; he has already reaped the reward of the just; he has been already elevated to the glories of that immortality, into which an undeviating life of purity, benevolence, and charity, insured his admission. I can do so, because his conduct and maxims tended to shed lustre upon the Church of England, upon that institution so essentially excellent, and reasonable in tenets and principles: and, when administered by such hands as Mr. Rightford's, so worthy the support of its followers, so deserving of the respect of its opponents. I can do so, because that good man's whole existence may be considered as typical of a large portion of English pastors, whose tolerance, disinterestedness, exemplary virtue, unaffected piety, profound learning, and zealous discharge of their parochial duties, if imitated by the whole, would place the Established Church beyond the reach of calumny,

and render secular aid, or legislative interference, utterly unnecessary.

Rightford was the younger son of a poor country clergyman, who lived long enough to give him an excellent education, and then, dying, left him to his own resources. He had taken his degrees at Cambridge, and then embraced holy orders. He had an elder brother, who had obtained a writership in India: and although he was supposed to be amassing a large fortune, had never held communication with his younger relative. During many years, Mr. Rightford served as curate to a wealthy prebendary; but, having no interest, no other support, than his own merits, saw year after year fleet by, without the slightest chance of preferment. And how could such a man expect it, in a country where so large a proportion of church patronage has become an article of pecuniary speculation, or worldly barter; where family connexion, or political opinions, too often bias the selections of the dispensers of ecclesiastical honours; and where the difference between Whig and Tory, and not that between a devout and laborious Christian, and a careless and negligent pastor, is held to be the standard of

clerical aptitude? But let Mr. Rightford tell his own brief tale.

"My income, for nearly fifteen years," said he to me one day, "little exceeded forty pounds per annum. By strict economy, by constant self-denial, and, by giving lessons to the sons of one or two wealthy parishioners, during the vacations, I contrived to procure sufficient for my wants, and I subsequently opened to myself another source of emolument, which added to my comforts. A charity sermon was to be preached at the provincial church, in the presence of the diocesan. My rector, who was son to the neighbouring nobleman, who held the advowson, but who was a fashionable non-resident, and rarely came amongst us, unless upon a visit to his father, was selected to perform this duty. On the evening previous, he sent for me to the hall, and, holding out his hand, said, 'I am free to confess, my dear Rightford, that I am so little in the habit of writing sermons,' that I am rather embarrassed upon the present occasion. What I have penned does not satisfy me: and, that being the case, will, I fear, give less satisfaction to the bishop, especially, as, upon his report, I hope

to be appointed to higher honours. To crib from any printed sermon, would not be prudent, as his lordship is as notorious for his excellent memory, as it is but justice to say he is for his piety and learning. Now, my dear Rightford, I place my trust in you: I know your powers. You have the reputation, through these parts, of preaching in a manner so affecting, so eloquent, that my church is filled, and the dissenting ministers croak to empty walls. You will, therefore, confer an immense favour upon me, if you will devote a few hours to writing a sermon; and if you can let me have it early in the morning, I will read it over, and prepare myself. You are not rich, and a little addition to your income will not, perhaps, be unacceptable.'

"'Certainly not,' replied I.

"'Well, then, I will give you five guineas.'

"'Oh, sir,' answered I, 'the scripture certainly tells us, that the labourer is worthy of his hire; but if my humble exertions can be any way instrumental to your advancement, I shall be amply repaid.'

"'That is extremely generous in you, and worthy of your character,' retorted he; 'but I

must insist upon your accepting some remuneration for your service. Besides, if I obtain preferment, I shall require your further aid: and, upon your promising to furnish me a sermon every week, or upon such extraordinary occasions, when I may be called upon by their majesties to officiate before them, I will give you a guinea for each production. This will increase your income to nearly one hundred a year. Of course, all this must be strictly *sub sigillo*. I know you are conscientious and scrupulous; but whether preaching the word of God with your own lips, or diffusing it through the medium of another's mouth, you are equally serving the cause of your heavenly Master. This consideration ought to overcome all your scruples.'

"I hesitated: but, feeling that it would be absurd in me to decline so fair a means of adding to my scanty income, I consented, and promised faithfully to maintain secrecy. He seemed overjoyed: and I returned home, sat up all night, accomplished my task, and presented it to him at the appointed time.

"I had often remarked, with feelings of gratitude to the Almighty, that my sermons deeply

affected my auditors. But powerful as had been the effects of my words upon the congregation, at my parish church, never had they produced greater emotion than upon this occasion. In truth, I myself was moved to tears. This," added he, modestly, "was, probably, not so much from the matter, as from the manner of the young rector, who, to do him justice, read with remarkable unction and effect.

"When the service was over—when the money, amounting to an unusually large sum, was counted out in the vestry, my patron's father entered with the bishop. The former, his eye still moistened, embraced his son, and appeared much delighted at his unexpected success; for I saw him slip a hundred pound note into his pocket, whispering to him, with a smile, 'We must reverse the old adage—charity, my dear Robert, shall end at home.'

"The bishop, who had also been extremely affected, shook the preacher by the hand, extolled his sermon, as one of the finest he had ever heard, begged for a copy, that it might be printed and distributed, and added, 'We cannot, my dear sir, allow such talents to rust. They require a more extensive, a nobler field. Such

powers might be most worthily and successfully exerted in upholding our calumniated church, in the metropolis, where the vanities, and, alas! the prevalent remissness of the world, in attending to their religious duties, require much greater attention than in your parish, which, through the force of your word and example, I am happy to hear, might serve as a model to many others. If the recommendation of the elders of the church can have any weight in our day, when the most virtuous and sacred are held up to scorn, and the clergy defiled by every wanton scoffer, I will lose no time in supporting your application for preferment, to the utmost of my humble power, which, when backed by your own merit, and, above all, by my noble friend's parliamentary influence, more powerful than all the rest, may fully entitle you to expect success.'

"During this time, the object of these encomiums seemed no ways at his ease: he blushed, muttered a few words of thanks, scarcely dared lift his eyes upon me, and betrayed all the embarrassment of a man conscious of having committed an unworthy action. But this did but add to his triumph; for the bishop, who little

suspected the fraud, and was ignorant of his general negligence, whispered to the peer, ‘ I congratulate you, my dear lord, in being the father of a young man, who combines so much christian humility with so much talent and zeal for the church. I venture to prognosticate, that, by God's grace, he will be rewarded, in due time, with the highest dignities the church can bestow upon its ministers.'

"After this, the bishop bowed very condescendingly to me, asked me how long I had been in holy orders, desired me to aid and support my patron with all my heart, and with all my soul, and I should be rewarded in the next world. The carriages and four, with their splendid liveries, having arrived to convey away the noble host and his party, they stepped in, and drove off, to spend the rest of the day in the luxurious convivialities of the hall. I saw them depart, with hat in hand, and with mingled pain and gratification.

"I then set out on foot to return across the fields to my small lodging, where I ate my frugal meal, and prepared myself for evening service. In a few days my patron was rewarded with the rich prebendal stall he had solicited, and I re-

ceived a note reminding me of my promise, which I punctually fulfilled. Ere many months, I heard that the church, at which he officiated in the metropolis, had become the crowded resort of all the great world, who congregated there, not, I fear, from love or admiration of his preaching, but because they there met 'every body.' It was considered quite a solecism in Sunday fashion for the great folk to take their drive in the park, or to attend Lady Salisbury's card parties, without at least knowing the text of my rector's morning discourse. I read some criticisms upon these in a newspaper.

"'St. ———'s Church,' said the paragraph, 'was thronged as usual yesterday with fashionables. There was as much competition for pews as for Opera boxes on the first night of a new ballet. We venture, nevertheless, to observe, that however admirable, however eloquent, however replete with elevated moral doctrines, and the spirit of the gospel, the Hon. Dr. Delphant's sermons may be, the general maxims of the preacher evince a spirit of tolerance, not, perhaps, exactly accordant with the supremacy of the established church. Whilst we approve of his doctrine of the remis-

sion of sin, and the unbounded mercy of our divine Judge, we think the Hon. and Rev. Doctor carries the principle of forgiveness beyond just bounds, and does not sufficiently set forth the avenging terrors which infallibly await the guilty.'

"I almost smiled at a criticism which complained of my advocating that tolerance which is the first duty of every Christian, the very birthright of their reformed creed.

"Another paragraph which I read rather surprised me.—'The publishers beg leave to announce that the third edition of the Hon. and Rev. Dr. Delphant's sermons will be ready for delivery upon Saturday next. Early application will be necessary to ensure copies.' I knew not what the value of these sermons might be, and could not suppose them to be great, for, at the instigation of a friend, I had applied to the same publishers, to dispose of two volumes of others, and received for answer, that, 'such matter was a complete drug, and not worth a penny except for the grocer.' But, upon reading the announcement of a third edition, I concluded that the value of such productions had risen, or that those I had offered to the publisher were of

inferior merit to those furnished to my rector; an error from which I was relieved upon seeing at the stationer's shop a copy wherein appeared several of my rejected sermons, bound up with the rest, and some of these honoured with laudatory notes.

"I thought this a hard case, and wrote to the doctor, who, after a month's delay, sent me a very obliging but evasive reply, enclosing, however, twenty-five pounds, and saying, that as every thing in literature, no matter what the subject, depended upon 'name and fashion,' if I thought it worth while to avail myself of his 'vogue,' I might send him up all my manuscript sermons, and he would publish them in his own name, and insure their success. He added, 'If you feel yourself equal to get up a book of tales, portraying scenes in humble life, which, during your long intercourse with my parishioners, you must have had ample opportunities of collecting, I think it might put a couple of hundred in your pocket. I must observe, however, that they must be written in a high church spirit, with a decided anti-catholic bias, and no less decided leaning to Tory principles. Select for your subjects, death-beds, seductions,

poaching, the misery resulting from the early marriage of the peasantry, and the immense benefits conferred upon the people by the aristocracy; support the existing institutions in church and state; advocate the cause of the corporations; dwell upon the dangers of reform, and if you can bring in one or two hypocritical dissenting ministers, or Irish vagabonds, in the shape of reapers, committing murder, so much the better, as we are doing our best to get up a 'No Popery' cry. Take for your title, 'Tales of my Ministry, by a Country Clergyman,' and it will be very hard if, with the assistance of my name, we do not run into three editions.'

"I pondered upon this proposition; but the conditions laid down being inconsistent with the principles of equity, reason, and the advancing progress of knowledge, to which I was as much attached as the religion of which I was a minister, I felt no inclination for the task: besides, I began to penetrate the artful character and object of my superior, and, with reluctance, attributed to him a desire, not only to deprive me of the just fruits of my labour, but to build his own celebrity upon my exertions. I declined, therefore, and with the exception of another

twenty-five pounds, which he sent me as the price of the remainder of my rejected sermons, published in his third edition, I heard no more upon the subject.

"My life thus flowed on in the peaceful occupations of my vocation, without any striking incident to yield variety, but not without its charms, and deep emotions.

"But devotion to my pastoral duties was not the only subject which occupied my mind. I was a man—frail as all men are: I had a heart attuned to love my fellow-creatures. I did love them. But I felt that I was alone. I, the consoler of my flock, had no consoler for myself; I had no relative except my brother, and him I had lost sight of. Susceptible to all those emotions to which a life of solitude and intercourse with nature adds increasing force, I loved my fellow-creatures, and of children I was so fond that I would have adopted one to rear it as my own.

"There came to settle at a cottage in our parish, a naval officer, a widower, with several children. The eldest of these, a girl, was fifteen years younger than myself,—that is her portrait. Fiction could scarcely imagine any-

thing more graceful, more lovely, and yet it is not flattered. We often met. I had no prospects. Honour, therefore, and the interest of her I loved, bade me suppress my feelings, and conceal my affection. Alas! what had I to offer, beyond unsullied worship?—what gift had I to tempt her with, beyond the rose or violet, culled from my own small garden? All that I felt, I buried in my breast, and prayed for strength to combat my soul's feebleness: and yet withal, my secret was betrayed. Her eye, eloquent as her speech, told me she knew I loved her, and that she did not spurn my homage. This filled my soul with mingled joy and bitterness: I dared not speak, and, fearing my own weakness, shunned her presence.

"One day I met the father in my rambles, and, with the frankness of a generous sailor, he stretched forth his hand, and, after some trifling observations, said, 'Hark you, Rightford, you love my Lucy.' I started, but made no reply. 'I am a plain-spoken man,' continued he: 'she loves you in return. I tell you this because I also love you, and know that I can trust to your honour, as I would to the best bower in a stiff gale. But, my good fellow, love is but a

poor item in the purser's books. If you can bowse up enough to keep yourselves afloat, you shall carry off the little craft and my blessing; so now you know how the land lies.'

"I thanked him from my soul, and repaid his confidence by frankly avowing my sentiments, but added that, as I had no prospect of amending my condition, it was a duty I owed to him as my friend, and to her as the object of my affection, to avoid, withdraw, and wean myself from an attachment that must entail misery upon all. The sailor again shook my hand, saying that he honoured me, and pitied his daughter, and we parted. For some months more I struggled on, seeking to conquer my passion, and to avoid the sight of my beloved. What passed in her mind, I know not; but the rose faded from her cheek, her eye lost its lustre, and, alas! she seemed as if her heart was tortured with that pain of which my own was a partaker.

"At last, the daily, hourly combat passing in my soul distracted my thoughts, and enfeebled my health so much, that I feared, unless I removed to some distant county, I might sink under the efforts which honour and principle

imposed upon me. But where bend my steps, or seek an existence, if I abandoned my present residence? Even had the opportunity presented itself, the thoughts of quitting the place which contained all that was dear to me on earth, was fraught with mortal bitterness; but the sacrifice was necessary for her, if not for me, and so I bethought me of a college friend, who had some influence, and, through his means, procured a curacy in Wales of somewhat equal value with my own.

"I will not dwell upon the agony of the parting-day—upon all I suffered when tearing myself from the spot which had so long been to me a tranquil, peaceful home,—I will not speak of my soul's anguish upon the Sunday, when, from the pulpit, I addressed my flock for the last time: I could scarce give utterance to my words for deep emotion; and, from the sobs and sighs I heard, I found they also shared my grief, and pitied me. Lucy was not there—that pain was saved me; but her father was, and he and his wept bitterly. And yet the parting-hour was not unmixed with consolation. Grey-headed men, who had looked

forward to my ministry in the last and not far-distant hour of passing hence, held forth their aged hands, and blessed me; young maidens, who had hoped that I might join their hands with those they loved, came weeping round; and children, who, through almighty grace, I had thought to instruct in virtue, loyalty, and christian fellowship, approached, and craved my blessing;—then, as I turned away, the muffled bells tolled forth a dirge of sorrow, and the good people came with offerings, and many humble tokens of that kindly love, which, God knows, I most tenderly reciprocated. In two days more, I reached my destination, and found relief from change of scene and unabated devotion to my old pursuits: two years thus passed away without any change.

"It was upon the close of a chill and dreary winter's evening, as I sat studying in my modest chamber, that my door opened, and the post-woman's daughter entered, and, taking forth a letter, said, 'I've brought this to you, sir, because my mother says it is addressed "to be forwarded instantly."' The handwriting was strange. I broke it open: it was from my bro-

ther's agents, who, after briefly announcing his death upon his passage home from India, stated that no will had been found amongst his papers, and that, in consequence of this, I, as his next of kin, and indeed his only surviving relation, was entitled to the whole of his property, which amounted to nearly fifty thousand pounds, in the funds, together with a small estate in this county.

"Although my brother had never behaved to me from infancy as a brother, and although he had never answered any of my letters, and had refused me assistance, I thought of the days of our infancy,—I thought of the love I bore to him, and, forgetting his unkindness in the warmth of my own attachment, bedewed the paper with my tears. But my mind was strangely perplexed between sorrow at the loss of so near a relation and joy at the unexpected intelligence, which raised me at once from a state bordering upon necessity to one of such wealth and splendour as far exceeded the wildest creations of my fancy, and which enabled me to throw myself at the feet of my beloved, and to offer her a portion worthy of her acceptance.

"I could not sleep that night: my conscience smote me for rejoicing, whilst my heart rebelled against my conscience. I arose at daybreak, and having written to the agents to announce my immediate arrival in London, I threw myself into a coach, and hastened back to my old village. Then flying to my friend the captain's house, I placed the banker's letter before him, and said that I had come to claim the fulfilment of his promise respecting his daughter. The joy of the honest sailor was demonstrated in the most cordial manner. He jumped about, snapped his fingers, seized me round the waist, and danced me about the room, until I implored him to release me. Then begging my pardon for showing so much joy at the death of my brother, he ran to the door, roared out in the passage, 'Lucy! ahoy! pipe all hands for splicing. Man the yards for a salute!' This brought up all the family, and lastly the dear object of my affections. What passed between us, I need not repeat: suffice it to say, that without affectation or pretended coyness, she participated in her father's joy, and consented to bless me with her hand. On the same day I

proceeded to London, and obtained possession of the property, with this house, and so soon as decency for my brother's death permitted, the marriage took place, and I removed with my dear Lucy to this residence, when I subsequently purchased the advowson of the neighbouring living.

"Here we lived for fifteen years in the enjoyment of every worldly happiness, until it pleased the Almighty to take from me her, whose life had made mine one dream of bliss. His will be done! My son, inheriting his mother's countenance, has hitherto walked in the path of her virtues; a pride, an honour to my old age—a blessing to my remaining years."

To this brief sketch of Mr. Rightford's history, I have only to add, that increased wealth brought with it, if possible, increased devotion to his ministry, and with an extension of his own independence, his first object was to diffuse independence and contentment around him. The same labours that had engaged the time of the humble curate, occupied that of the wealthy vicar: each individual of his flock, no matter

what their age or sex, was known to him. He visited their habitations, established lecture-rooms, and schools for infants and adults; studied their characters, seeking to encourage the good, to strengthen the falling, and to remonstrate with the ill-disposed. They found in him a cheerful father, and he, in them, a grateful, willing family. His income, far beyond his wants, was mostly expended amongst his parishioners, from whom he never absented himself. In health and prosperity he rejoiced with them, in sickness and adversity he consoled them, and whether by day or by night, his heart, his hand, and purse, were open to their moral and corporeal wants. He did not seek to enforce his principles by persecution, or by hastily condemning those who differed from him, but strove to confirm the faithful through the force of his example, and to convince the sceptical by the mildness of his doctrine. Tolerance towards all others was his first maxim, and whilst he devotedly clung to the principles, and laboured to uphold the excellence of the Established Church, he was no less desirous to see dissenters of all classes admitted into the benefits enjoyed

by their privileged fellow-countrymen. Such, to the last moment of his valuable life, was the Reverend E. Rightford. In the next chapter, the reader will hear more of him.

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